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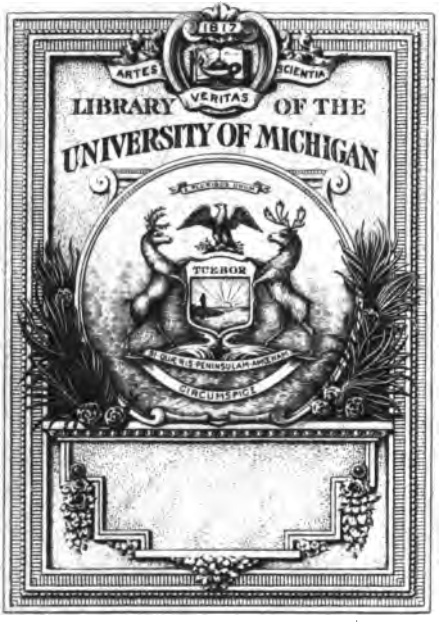

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THE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

RICHARD SIBBS, D.D.

LATE MASTER OF CATHARINE-HALL,

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AND

PREACHER OF GRAY'S INN, LONDON.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SHORT MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR's LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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LIFE

OF

THE AUTHOR.

MR. RICHARD SIBBS was born on the borders of Suffolk, near Sudbury, in the year 1573, and after receiving his school education, probably at the latter place, was sent to Cambridge in 1595, in his 18th year, where he was admitted of St. John's College.—Here his proficiency in learning was so uncommon, that he was soon promoted in his degrees, and chosen Fellow of his College, while the excellence of his character recommended him to all who knew him, and afforded a presage that he would prove an ornament to the University, and to the church, to which he was probably destined by his parents. It pleased God to convert him by the ministry of the learned and judicious Mr. PAUL BAYNES, while he was Lecturer of St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge, in which office he succeeded the famous Mr. PERKINS. Mr. BAYNES had himself been so remarkable an instance of the power of divine

divine grace on a seemingly hardened heart, that he was the more qualified to preach repentance to others.

Some time after Mr. SIBBS had taken his degree of Master of Arts, he entered into the ministry, was chosen Lecturer of Trinity Church, Cambridge, and was promoted to the vicarage of that parish about two years before his death, on the resignation of the celebrated Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN in his favour. During the time he preached this lecture, his church was crowded both with students and townsmen; and he soon became the happy instrument of bringing some souls to a knowledge of the truth, and encouraging others to hold on with perseverance, and against all the obstacles which in those days were presented from all quarters.

But it was not here only that the chief fruits of his ministry were visible. About the year 1618, he was invited to be preacher at Gray's Inn Chapel, London, where his ministry found such general approbation and acceptance, that, besides the learned lawyers of the house, many persons of high rank, chiefly gentry and citizens, resorted to hear him, and many had reason to bless God for the benefit which they received by him. Dr. WILLIAM GOUGE, the famous preacher at Blackfriars, who frequently heard him preach, says, that "he sometimes had a little stammering in the time "of his preaching; but then his judicious hearers al-"ways expected some rare and excellent notions from "him."

In

In the year 1626, his reputation was such at the University, that upon the death of Dr. HILLS, he was chosen master of Katherine Hall, an honourable and useful station, which he retained the whole of his life, and is recorded in the annals of that College, as one of its benefactors. To this respect he seems amply entitled, as he interested himself in procuring subscriptions from persons of worth and opulence, for the enlargement of the buildings, and for the maintenance of men of learning and religion; so that, although it was before a College of inferior note, he advanced it to great reputation. From this period, his time was probably divided between London and Cambridge, and his ministry was exercised in both places, or wherever it pleased God to give him an opportunity.

As to his general character in advanced life, it appears that his learning was mixed with much humility; so that he was prone to undervalue those labours of his, which, in the opinion of others, breathed life and spirit, were strong of heaven, and spoke with authority and power to men's consciences. His care in the course of his ministry, was to lay a good foundation in the heads and hearts of his hearers; and though he was a wise master-builder, and that in one of the most eminent auditories for learning and piety, yet, according to the grace which was given to him (which was indeed like that of Elisha, *a double portion*) he was still taking all occasions to preach the fundamentals to them, and, among the rest, the incarnation of the Son of

of God. And preaching at several times, and from various texts, there is scarce any one of those incomparable benefits, which accrue to us thereby, nor any of those holy impressions, which the meditation hereof ought to work in our hearts, which was not by him unfolded. The truth of this appeared so evident to an eminent divine, upon reading his sermons, when in print, that he said, "I less wonder now at the noted "humility of the author, finding how often his thoughts "dwelt upon the humiliation of Christ."—Indeed he was thoroughly studied in the holy scriptures, which made him a man of God, *perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work:* and as became a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God, he endeavoured to teach it to others, and to store them with knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding. He was a man that enjoyed much communion with God; and, like John the Baptist, was a burning and shining light, wasting and spending himself to enlighten others.

He was, upon all occasions, very charitable, drawing forth not only his purse in relieving, but his very bowels in commiserating the wants and necessities of the poor members of Christ's church. He used sometimes, in the summer months, to go abroad to the houses of some worthy personages, where he was an instrument of much good; not only by his private labours, but by his prudent counsel and advice, that upon every occasion he was ready to minister unto them. And thus having done his work on earth, he

was

was received to heaven, peaceably and comfortably resigning up his spirit unto God, in the year 1635,* and in the 58th year of his age. He was as one taken from the evil to come, and although he met with some obstructions in his ministry, had but a faint glimpse of the desolations and confusion which the unhappy civil war brought upon church and state.

As to his works, they are now before the reader, who, it is hoped, will require no additional encouragement to induce him to prize them. He was famous, says Mr. LEIGH, for the piety, learning, devotion, and polished style of his *Bruised Reed*, and the *Soul's Conflict*. The late Mr. MIDDLETON of London, adds, that the christian reader, who is under exercise of spirit, will hardly be able to find books more likely to afford him direction, comfort and relief. Upon the subject of spiritual distress, there is scarce any book in our language more valuable, except the Bible. Of his sermons, the famous Mr. JOHN DODD says, "I judge "these sermons a very profitable and excellent help, "both to the understanding of that dark and most di- "vine scripture (*Canticles* v.); as also, to kindle in "the heart all heavenly affections towards Christ Je- "sus. The whole frame whereof is carried with such "wisdom, gravity, piety, judgment, and experience, "that it commends itself to all that are godly wise: "And

* His Biographer, CLARK, gives this as the date of his death in one place, and 1631 in another. The latter, we believe to be right, and his birth therefore must be fixed in 1573.

"And I doubt not but they shall find their temptations "answered, their fainting spirits revived, their under- "standings enlightened, and their graces confirmed; "so that they shall have cause to praise God for the "worthy Author's godly and painful labours."

To these testimonies, others may be added. Mr. NEAL, in his History of the Puritans, says, that "Dr. "SIBBS was one of the most celebrated preachers of "his time, and well known in the learned world. He "was a divine of good learning, thoroughly acquaint- "ed with the scriptures; a burning and shining light; "of a most humble, charitable disposition. His works "discover him to have been of a heavenly evangelical "spirit; the comforts of which he enjoyed at his "death."

The Rev. Mr. ROBERT TRAIL gives the following account in his *Protestant Doctrine of Justification Vindicated*. "I have heard that Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN "was, in his youth, an Arminian, or at least inclin- "ing that way; but was, by the Lord's grace, brought "off by Dr. SIBBS his clearing up this same point of "Christ's being the head and representative of all his "people."

Mr. JOB ORTON, in one of his letters, says, "SIBBS' "*Bruised Reed* cost me *threepence*, and I would not "take *three pounds* for it. It is my constant companion."

Dr.

Dr. DODDRIDGE's character of SIBBS is, that "his "language is nervous and decent; his style pathetic "and tender; especially the *Bruised Reed* and *Soul's* "*Conflict*."—

We shall only add the encomium of that truly evangelical poet, FRANCIS QUARLES.

ON THE WORKS OF DR. SIBBS.

Fool that I was, to think my easy pen
Had strength enough to glorify the fame
Of this known author, this rare man of men;
Or give the least advantage to his name.
Who think by praise to make his name more bright,
Show the sun's glory by dull candle-light.

Bless'd saint! thy hallowed pages do require
No slight preferment from our slender lays:
We stand amaz'd, at what we most admire:
Ah! what are saints the better for our praise?
He that commends this volume, does no more
Than warm the fire, or gild the massy ore.

Let me stand silent then! O may that Spirit,
Which led thy hand, direct mine eye, my breast,
That I may read, and do—and so inherit,
(What thou enjoy'st and taught'st) eternal rest!
Fool that I was, to think my lines could give
Life to that work, by which they hope to live.

PREFACE.

GOD hath laid up all grace and comfort in Christ for us, and planted a wonderful sweetness of pity and love in his heart towards us. As God his Father hath fitted him with a body, so with a heart, to be a merciful Redeemer.—Heb. x. 7. *What doth the scriptures speak, but Christ's love and tender care over those that are humbled? and besides the mercy that resteth in his own breast, he works the like impression in his ministers and others, to comfort the feeble minded, and to bear with the weak.*—1 Thess. v. 14. *Ministers by their calling are friends of the bride, and to bring Christ and his spouse together, and therefore ought, upon all good occasions, to lay open all the excellencies of Christ, and amongst others, as that he is highly born, mighty, one in whom all the treasures of wisdom are hid, &c. so likewise gentle, and of a good nature, and of a gracious disposition. It cannot but cheer the heart of the spouse, to consider in all the infirmities and miseries she is subject unto, that she hath a husband of a kind disposition, that knows how to give the honour of mild usage to the weaker vessel. That he will be so far from rejecting her, because she is weak, that he will pity her the more. And as he is kind at all times, so especially when it is most seasonable, he will speak to her heart, especially in the wilderness.*—Hosea ii. 14. *The more glory to God, and the more comfort to a christian soul, ariseth from the belief and application of these things—the more the enemy of God's glory and man's comfort, labours to breed mispersuasions of them, that if he cannot keep men from heaven, and bring them into that cursed condition he is in himself, yet he may trouble them in their passage. Some, and none of the worst, Satan prevails with so far, as to neglect the means, from fear they should, (being so sinful) dishonour God and increase their sins: and so they lie smothering under this temptation, as it*

were bound hand and foot by Satan, not daring to look to Christ, and yet are secretly upheld by a spirit of faith, shewing itself in hidden sighs and groans unto God. These are abused by false representations of Christ; all whose ways to such, are ways of mercy, and all his thoughts, thoughts of love. The more Satan is malicious in keeping the soul in darkness, the more care is to be had of establishing the soul upon that which will stay it. Amongst other grounds to build our faith on, are, the free offer of grace to all that will receive it; the gracious invitation of all that are weary and heavy laden, those that have nothing to buy withal; the command binding to believe, the danger of not believing, being shut up prisoners thereby under the guilt of all other sins, the sweet intreaty to believe, and ordaining ambassadors to desire peace, putting tender affections into them answerable to their calling, ordaining sacraments for the sealing of the covenant. Besides these, I say, and such moving inducements, this is one, infusing vigour and strength into all the rest, that they proceed from Christ, a person authorized, and from those bowels that moved him not only to become a man, but a curse for us; hence it is, that he will not quench the smoaking flax. It adds strength to faith, to consider that all expressions of love issue from nature in Christ, which is constant. God knows, that as we are prone to sin, so when conscience is thoroughly awakened, we are as prone to despair for sin; and therefore he would have us know, that he setteth himself in the covenant of grace, to triumph in Christ over the greatest evils and enemies we fear; and that his thoughts are not as our thoughts are; that he is God, and not man; that there are heights, and depths, and breadths of mercy in him, above all the depths of our sin and misery; that we should never be in such a forlorn condition, wherein there should be ground of despair, considering our sins are the sins of men, his mercy the mercy of an infinite God. But though it be a truth, clearer than the sun beams, that a broken-hearted sinner ought to embrace mercy so strongly enforced: yet there is no truth that the heart shutteth itself more against than this, especially in a sense of misery, when the soul is fittest for mercy, until the Holy Spirit sprinkleth the conscience with the blood of Christ, and sheddeth his love into the heart, that so the blood of Christ in the conscience may cry louder than

than the guilt of sin; for only God's Spirit can raise the conscience with comfort above guilt; because he only is greater than the conscience. Men may speak comfort, but it is Christ's Spirit that can only comfort. Peace is the fruit of the lips, but yet created to be so. No creature can take off wrath from the conscience, but he that set it on, though all the prevailing arguments be used that can be brought forth, till the Holy Ghost effectually persuadeth, by a divine kind of rhetoric, which ought to raise up our hearts to him who is the comforter of his people, that he would seal them to our souls. Now God dealing with men as understanding creatures, the manner which he useth in this powerful work upon their consciences, is by way of friendly intercourse, as intreaty, and persuasion, and discovery of his love in Christ, and Christ's gracious inclination thus even to the weakest and lowest of men. And therefore, because he is pleased by such like motives to enter into the heart, and settle a peace there, we ought with reverence to regard all such sanctified helps, and among the rest this of making use of this comfortable description of Christ by God the Father, in going boldly in all our necessities to the throne of grace. But we must know this comfort is only the portion of those that give themselves up to Christ's government; that are willing in all things to be disposed of by him. For here we see in this scripture both joined together, mercy to bruised reeds, and yet government prevailing by degrees over corruptions. Christ so favoureth weak ones, as that he frameth their souls to a better condition than they are in. Neither can it be otherwise, but that a soul looking for mercy should submit itself at the same time to be guided. Those relations of husband, head, shepherd, &c. imply not only meekness and mercy, but government likewise. When we become Christians to purpose, we live not exempt from all service, but only we change our Lord. Therefore if any in an ill course of life snatch comforts before they are reached out unto them, let them know they do it at their own perils. It is as if some ignorant man should go into an apothecary's shop, stored with variety of medicines of all sorts, and should take what comes next to hand, poison perhaps instead of physic. There is no word of comfort in the whole book of God, intended for such as regard iniquity in their hearts, Psal. lxvi. 14. *though they do not*

act it in their lives. Their only comfort is, that the sentence of damnation is not executed, and thereupon there is yet opportunity of safer thoughts and resolutions, otherwise they stand not only convicted, but condemned by the word, and Christ that rideth on the white horse, Rev. vi. 2. *will spend all his arrows upon them, and wound them to death. If any shall bless himself in an ill way, God's wrath shall burn to hell against such. There is no more comfort to be expected from Christ, than there is care to please him. Otherwise to make him an abetter of a lawless and loose life, is to transform him into a phantasm, nay, into the likeness of him whose works he came to destroy, which is the most detestable idolatry of all. One way whereby the Spirit of Christ prevaileth in his, is to preserve them from such thoughts; yet we see people will frame a divinity to themselves, pleasing to the flesh, suitable to their own ends, which being vain in the substance, will prove likewise vain in the fruit, and as a building upon the sand.*

The main scope of all is, to allure us to the entertaining of Christ's mild, safe, wise, victorious government, and to leave men naked of all pretences, why they will not have Christ to rule over them, when we see salvation not only strongly wrought, but sweetly dispensed by him. His government is not for his own pleasure, but for our good. We are saved by a way of love, that love might be kindled by this way in us to God again, because this affection melteth the soul, and mouldeth it to all duty and acceptable manner of performance of duty. It is love in duties that God regards more than duties themselves. This is the true and evangelical disposition arising from Christ's love to us, and our love to him again; and not to fear to come to him, as if we were to take an elephant by the tooth. It is almost a fundamental mistake, to think that God delights in slavish fears, when as the fruits of Christ's kingdom are peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, for from this mistake come weak, slavish, superstitious conceits.

Two things trouble the peace of Christians very much, their weaknesses hanging upon them, and fear of holding out for time to come. A remedy against both is in this text, for Christ is set out here as a mild Saviour to weak ones; and for time to come, his powerful

powerful care and love is never interrupted, until he bring forth judgement to victory. And thereupon it is that both the means of salvation and grace wrought by means, and glory the perfection of grace, come all under one name of the Kingdom of God so oft; because whom by means he brings to grace, he will by grace bring to glory.

This maketh the thoughts of the latter judgement comfortable unto us, that He, who is then to be our Judge, cannot but judge for them who have been ruled by him here, for whom he guides by his counsel, those he brings to glory. If our faith were but as firm as our state in Christ is secure and glorious, what manner of men should we be?

If I had gone about to affect writing in a high strain, I should have missed of mine end, and crossed the argument in hand. For shall we that are servants, quench those weak sparks which our Lord himself is pleased to cherish? I had rather hazard the censure of some, then hinder the good of others; which, if it be any ways furthered by these few observations, I have what I aimed at: I intended not a treatise, but the opening of a text; what I shall be drawn to do in this kind must be by degrees, as leisure in the midst of many interruptions will permit. The Lord guide our hearts, tongues, and pens, for his glory, and the good of his people.

R. SIBBS.

THE

BRUISED REED AND SMOAKING FLAX,

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

SEVERAL SERMONS,

FROM

MATT. xii. 20.—*A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoaking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgement unto victory.*

THE Prophet Iſaiah, being lifted up, and carried with the wing of prophetical ſpirit, paſſeth over all the time between him, and the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt in the fleſh, and ſeeth with the eye of prophecy, and with the eye of faith, Chriſt as preſent, and preſenteth him in the name of God to the ſpiritual eye of others, in theſe words, *Behold my ſervant whom I have choſen*, Iſa. xlii. 1. which place is alledged by St. Matthew, as fulfilled now in Chriſt. Wherein is propounded,

Firſt, The calling of Chriſt to his office.

Secondly, The execution of it.

For his calling: God ſtileth him here his *righteous ſervant*, &c. Chriſt was God's ſervant in the greateſt piece of ſervice that ever was; a choſen, and a choice ſervant: he did and ſuffered all by commiſſion from the Father: wherein we may ſee the ſweet love of God to us, that counts the work of our ſalvation by Chriſt his greateſt ſervice. And that he will put his only beloved Son to that ſervice. He might well prefix [BEHOLD] to raiſe up our thoughts to the higheſt pitch of attention and admiration. In time of temptation, miſgiving con-

ourſelves with the prodigal. A marvellous hard thing it is, to bring a dull, and a ſhifting heart, to cry with feeling for mercy. Our hearts, like malefactors, until they be beaten from all ſhifts, never cry for the mercy of the judge.

2. Again, this bruiſing maketh us ſet a high price upon Chriſt; the goſpel is the gospel indeed then, then the fig-leaves of morality will do us no good; and

3. It maketh us more thankful, and from thankfulness more fruitful in our lives. For what maketh many ſo cold and barren, but that bruiſing for ſin never indeared God's grace unto them?

4. Likewiſe this dealing of God doth eſtabliſh us the more in his ways, having had knocks and bruiſings in our own ways. This is often the cauſe of relapſes and apoſtacies, becauſe men never ſmarted for ſin at the firſt; they were not long enough under the laſh of the law. Hence this inferior work of the Spirit, in bringing down high thoughts, is neceſſary before converſion. And for the moſt part, the Holy Spirit, to further the work of conviction, joineth ſome affliction, which being ſanctified, hath a healing and purging power.

Nay, after converſion we need bruiſing, that reeds may know themſelves to be reeds and not oaks; even reeds need bruiſing, by reaſon of the remainder of pride in our nature, and to let us ſee, that we live by mercy, and that weaker Chriſtians may not be too much diſcouraged, when they ſee ſtronger ones ſhaken and bruiſed. Thus Peter was bruiſed, when he wept bitterly; this reed, till he met with this bruiſe, had more wind in him than ſtrength. *Though all forſake thee, I will not, &c.* Matth. xxvi.

The people of God cannot be without theſe examples. The heroical deeds of thoſe great worthies do not comfort the church, ſo much as their falls and bruiſes do.

Thus David was bruiſed, until he came to a free confeſſion without guile of ſpirit, Pſal. xxxii.: nay, his ſorrows did riſe in his own feeling, unto the exquiſite pain of breaking of bones, Pſal. li. Thus Hezekiah complains, that God had *broken his bones as a lion*, Iſa. xxxviii. 13. Thus the choſen veſſel St Paul needed the meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, leſt he ſhould be lifted up above meaſure.

Hence we learn, that we muſt not paſs too harſh judgement upon ourſelves or others, when God doth exerciſe us with bruiſ-

ing

ing upon bruiſing; there muſt be a conformity to our head Chriſt, who was bruiſed for us; that we may know how much we are bound to him. Profane ſpirits, ignorant of God's ways in bringing his children to heaven, cenſure broken-hearted Chriſtians for deſperate perſons, when as God is about a gracious good work with them. It is no eaſy matter to bring a man from nature to grace, and from grace to glory, ſo unyielding and untractable are our hearts.

The ſecond point is, *That Chriſt will not break the bruiſed reed.* Phyſicians, though they put their patients to much pain, yet they will not deſtroy nature, but raiſe it up by degrees; ſurgeons will lance and cut, but not diſmember; a mother that hath a ſick and froward child, will not therefore caſt it away; and ſhall there be more mercy in the ſtream, than in the ſpring? ſhall we think there is more mercy in ourſelves, than in God, who planteth the affection of mercy in us? But for further declaration of Chriſt's mercy to all bruiſed reeds, conſider the comfortable relations he hath taken upon him of Husband, Shepherd, Brother, &c. which he will diſcharge to the utmoſt; for ſhall others by his grace fulfil what he calleth them unto, and not he, that out of his love hath taken upon him theſe relations, ſo thoroughly founded upon his father's aſſignment and his own voluntary undertaking? Conſider his names, borrowed from the mildeſt creatures, as Lamb, Hen, &c. to ſhew his tender care: conſider his very name, Jeſus, a Saviour, given him by God himſelf; conſider his office, anſwerable to his name, which is, that he ſhould *heal the broken-hearted*, Iſa. lxi. 1. At his baptiſm, the Holy Ghoſt ſat on him in the ſhape of a dove, to ſhew that he ſhould be a dove-like gentle Mediator. See the gracious manner of executing his offices, as a prophet, he came with bleſſings in his mouth, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit*, &c. Matth. v. and invited thoſe to come to him, whoſe heart ſuggeſted moſt exceptions againſt themſelves; *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden*, Matth. xi. 25. How did his bowels yearn, when *he ſaw the people as ſheep without a ſhepherd?* Matth. ix. 36. He never turned any back again, that came unto him, though ſome went away of themſelves. He came to die as a prieſt for his enemies: in the days of his fleſh he dictated a form of prayer unto his diſciples, and put petitions unto God into their mouths, and his Spirit to intercede in their hearts, and now makes interceſſion in heaven for weak Chriſtians, ſtanding between God's anger and them, and ſhed tears for thoſe that ſhed his blood: ſo he is a meek king, he will admit mourners into his preſence; a king of poor

poor and afflicted perſons; as he hath beams of Majeſty, ſo he hath bowels of mercies and compaſſion: a *Prince of peace*: why was he tempted, but that he might ſuccour thoſe that are tempted? What mercy may we not expect from ſo gracious a Mediator, that took our nature upon him, that he might be gracious; he is a phyſician good at all diſeaſes, eſpecially at the binding up of a broken heart, that he might heal our ſouls with a plaiſter of his own blood, and by that death ſave us, which we were the procurers of ourſelves by our own ſins; and hath he not the ſame bowels in heaven? *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* cried the head in heaven, when the foot was trodden on, on earth. Acts xix. His advancement hath not made him forget his own fleſh, though it hath freed him from paſſion, yet not from compaſſion towards us. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will only tear in pieces thoſe that will not have him rule over them. He will not ſhew his ſtrength againſt thoſe that proſtrate themſelves before him.

Uſe I.—What ſhould we learn from hence, but to *come boldly to the throne of grace* in all our grievances? Shall our ſins diſcourage us, when he appears there only for ſinners? Art thou bruiſed? be of good comfort, he calleth thee; conceal not thy wounds, open all before him, keep not Satan's counſel. Go to Chriſt, though trembling (as the poor woman) if we can but *touch the hem of his garment*, we ſhall be healed, and have a gracious anſwer: go boldly to God in our fleſh; for this end, that we might go boldly to him, he is fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone. Never fear to go to God, ſince we have ſuch a Mediator with him, that is not only our friend, but our brother and husband. Well might the angels proclaim from heaven, *Behold, we bring you tidings of joy*, Luke ii.: well might the apoſtle ſtir us up to *rejoice in the Lord again and again*, Phil. iv.: he was well adviſed upon what grounds he did it: peace and joy are two main fruits of his kingdom. Let the world go as it will, if we cannot rejoice in the world, yet we may rejoice in the Lord. His preſence maketh any condition comfortable. *Be not afraid*, (ſaith he to his diſciples, when they were afraid as if they had ſeen a ghoſt,) *it is I*; as if there were no cauſe of fear where he is preſent.

Uſe II.—Let this ſtay us, when we feel ourſelves bruiſed; Chriſt his courſe is firſt to wound, then to heal; no ſound whole ſoul ſhall ever enter into heaven: think in temptation, Chriſt was tempted for me, according to my trials will be my graces and comforts.

comforts. If Chriſt be ſo merciful as not to break me, I will not break myſelf by deſpair, nor yield myſelf over to the roaring lion Satan, to break me in pieces.

Uſe III.—See the contrary diſpoſition of Chriſt and Satan, and his inſtruments. Satan ſetteth upon us when we are weakeſt, as Simeon and Levi upon the Sichemites, when they were ſore, Gen. xxxiv.; but Chriſt will make up in us all the breaches ſin and Satan have made; he binds up the broken-hearted, and as a mother taketh moſt care of the moſt diſeaſed and weakeſt child; ſo doth Chriſt moſt mercifully incline to the weakeſt; and likewiſe putteth an inſtinct into the weakeſt things to rely upon ſomething ſtronger than themſelves for ſupport. The vine ſtayeth itſelf upon the elm; and the weakeſt creatures have oft the ſtrongeſt ſhelters. The conſciouſneſs of the church's weakneſs makes her willing to lean on her beloved, and to hide herſelf under his wing.

Objection.—But how ſhall we know whether we are ſuch as thoſe that may expect mercy?

Anſ.—By bruiſing is not meant thoſe that are brought low only by croſſes, but ſuch as by them are brought to ſee their ſin, which bruiſeth moſt of all. When conſcience is under the guilt of ſin, then every judgement brings a report of God's anger to the ſoul, and all leſſer troubles run into this great trouble of conſcience for ſin: as all corrupt humours run to the diſeaſed and bruiſed part of the body; and as every creditor falls upon the debtor, when he is once arreſted; ſo when conſcience is once awakened, all former ſins and preſent croſſes join together, to make the bruiſe the more painful: now he that is bruiſed, will be content with nothing but with mercy from him that hath bruiſed him; he hath wounded, and he muſt heal. 2. Again, a man truly bruiſed judgeth ſin the greateſt evil, and the favour of God the greateſt good. 3. He had rather hear of mercy, than of a kingdom. 4. He hath mean conceits of himſelf, and thinketh he is not worth the earth he treads on. 5. Towards others he is not cenſorious, as being taken up at home, but is full of ſympathy and compaſſion to thoſe that are under God's hand. 6. He thinketh thoſe that walk in the comforts of God's Spirit the happieſt men of the world. 7. He *trembleth at the word of God*, Isa. lxvi. and honoureth the very feet of thoſe bleſſed inſtruments that bring peace unto him. 8. He is more taken up with the inward exerciſes of a broken heart, than with formality, and is yet careful to uſe all ſanctified means to convey comfort.

Queſtion.

Question.—But how shall we come to have this temper?

Answer.—First, we must conceive of bruising, either as a state into which God bringeth us, or as a duty to be performed by us: both are here meant, we must join with God in bruising of ourselves; when he humbles us, let us humble ourselves, and not stand out against him, for then he will redouble his strokes; and let us justify Christ in all his chastisements, knowing that all his dealings towards us is to cause us to return into our own hearts; his work in bruising, tendeth to our work in bruising ourselves. Let us lament our own untowardness, and say, "Lord, "what an heart have I, that needs all this, that none of this "could be spared?" We must lay siege to the hardness of our own hearts, and aggravate sin all we can: we must look on Christ who was bruised for us, look on him whom we have pierced with our sins. But all directions will not prevail, unless God by his Spirit convince us deeply, setting our sins before us, and driving us to a stand. Then we will cry out for mercy. Conviction will breed contrition, and this humiliation. Therefore pray to God, that he would bring a clear and a strong light into all the corners of our souls, and accompany it with a spirit of power to lay our hearts low.

A set measure of bruising ourselves, cannot be prescribed, yet it must be so far, as we may prize Christ above all, and see that a Saviour must be had: and secondly, until we reform that which is amiss, though it be to the cutting off our right hand, or pulling out our right eye. There is a dangerous slighting of the work of humiliation; some alledging this for a pretence for their overly dealing with their own hearts, that Christ will not break the bruised reed; but such must know, that every sudden terror and short grief is not that which makes us bruised reeds; not a little hanging down our heads like a bulrush, Isa. lviii. 5. but a working our hearts to such a grief, as will make sin more odious unto us, than punishment; and until we offer an holy violence against it; else favouring ourselves, we make work for God to bruise us, and for sharp repentance afterwards. It is dangerous, I confess, in some cases with some spirits, to press too much and too long this bruising, because they may die under the wound and burden, before they be raised up again; therefore it is good in mixed assemblies to mingle comforts, that every soul may have its due portion. But if we lay this for a ground, that there is more mercy in Christ, than sin in us, there can be no danger in thorough dealing. It is better to go bruised to heaven, than

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found to hell. Therefore let us not take off ourselves too soon, nor pull off the plaister before the cure be wrought, but keep ourselves under this work till sin be the bitterest, and Christ the sweetest of all things. And when God's hand is upon us in any kind, it is good to divert our sorrow, for other things, to the root of all, which is sin. Let our grief run most in that channel, that as sin bred grief, so grief may consume sin.

Question.—But are we not bruised, unless we grieve more for sin, than we do for punishment?

Answer.—Sometimes our grief from outward grievances may lie heavier upon the soul, than grief for God's displeasure; because in such cases the grief works upon the whole man, both outward and inward, and hath nothing to stay it, but a little spark of faith, which by reason of the violent impression of the grievance is suspended in the exercises of it; and this is most felt in sudden distresses, which come upon the soul as a torrent or land flood, and especially in bodily distempers, which by reason of the sympathy between the soul and the body, work upon the soul so far, as they hinder not only the spiritual, but often the natural acts. Hereupon St James wisheth in affliction to pray ourselves, but in case of sickness to *send for the elders*, James v. 14. that may, as those in the gospel, offer up the sick person to God in their prayers, being unable to present his own case. Hereupon God admitteth of such a plea from the sharpness and bitterness of the grievance, as in David, Psal. vi. &c. the Lord knoweth whereof we are made, Psal. ciii. 14.; he remembereth we are but dust, that our strength is not the strength of steel. It is a branch of his faithfulness unto us as his creatures, whence he is called, *a faithful Creator; God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. and 1 Cor. x. 13. There were certain commandments which the Jews called the hedges of the law; as to fence men off from cruelty, he commanded they should not take the dam with the young, nor seethe the kid in the mother's milk, nor muzzle the mouth of the ox: Hath God care of beasts, and not of his more noble creature? and therefore we ought to judge charitably of the complaints of God's people, which are wrung from them in such cases. Job had the esteem with God of a patient man, notwithstanding those passionate complaints; faith overborne for the present, will get ground again; and grief for sin, although it come short of grief for misery in violence, yet it goeth beyond it in constancy; as

a running ſtream fed with a ſpring holdeth out, when a ſudden ſwelling brook faileth.

For the concluding of this point, and our encouragement to a thorough work of bruiſing, and patience under God's bruiſing of us, let all know, that none are fitter for comfort than thoſe that think themſelves fartheſt off. Men, for the moſt part, are not loſt enough in their own feeling, for a Saviour. A holy deſpair in ourſelves is the ground of true hope. In God, the fatherleſs find mercy, Hoſea xiv. If men were more fatherleſs, they ſhould feel more God's fatherly affection from heaven: for God that dwelleth in higheſt heavens, dwelleth likewiſe in the loweſt ſoul. Chriſt's ſheep are weak ſheep, and wanting in ſomething or other; he therefore applieth himſelf to the neceſſities of every ſheep, Ez. xxxiv. 16. he ſeeks that which was loſt, and brings again that which was driven out of the way, and binds up that which was broken, and ſtrengthens the weak: his tendereſt care is over the weakeſt: the lambs he carrieth in his boſom: *Peter, feed my lambs.* He was moſt familiar and open to the troubled ſouls. How careful was he that Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles ſhould not be too much dejected after his reſurrection? *Go, tell the diſciples, and tell Peter,* Mark xvi. 7. Chriſt knew that the guilt of their unkindneſs in leaving of him, had dejected their ſpirits. How gently did he endure Thomas his unbelief? and ſtooped ſo far unto his weakneſs, as to ſuffer him to thruſt his hand into his ſide.

For the ſecond branch, God will not quench the ſmoaking flax or wick, but will blow it up till it flameth. In ſmoaking flax there is but a little light, and that weak, as being not able to flame, and this little is mixed with ſmoke. The obſervations hence are, 1. That in God's children, eſpecially in their firſt converſion, there is but a little meaſure of grace, and that little mixed with much corruption, which like ſmoke is offenſive.—2. That Chriſt will not quench this ſmoaking flax.

For the firſt, "Grace is little at the firſt." There are ſeveral ages in Chriſtians, ſome babes, ſome young men. Grace is as a grain of muſtard-ſeed. Nothing ſo little as grace at firſt, and nothing more glorious afterwards: things of greateſt perfection are longeſt in coming to their growth. Man, the perfecteſt creature, comes to perfection by little and little; worthleſs things as muſhrooms, and the like, like Jonah's gourd, ſoon ſpring up, and ſoon vaniſh. A new creature is the moſt excellent frame in all the world, therefore it groweth up by degrees.

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We ſee in nature, that a mighty oak riſeth from an acorn. It is with a Chriſtian as it was with Chriſt, who ſprang out of the dead ſtock of Jeſſe, out of David's family, when it was at the loweſt, but he grew up higher than the heavens. It is not with the trees of righteouſneſs, as it was with the trees of paradise, which were created all perfect at the firſt. The ſeeds of all the creatures in this goodly frame of the world, were hid in the chaos, in that confuſed maſs at the firſt, out of which God did command all creatures to ariſe; in the ſmall ſeeds of plants lie hid both bulk and branches, bud and fruit. In a few principles lie hid all comfortable concluſions of holy truth. All thoſe glorious fireworks of zeal and holineſs in the ſaints, had their beginning from a few ſparks.

Let us not therefore be diſcouraged at the ſmall beginnings of grace, but look on ourſelves, as elected to be blameleſs and without ſpot. Let us only look on our imperfect beginning, to enforce further ſtrife to perfection, and to keep us in a low conceit. Otherwiſe, in caſe of diſcouragement, we muſt conſider ourſelves as Chriſt doth, who looks on us, as ſuch as he intendeth to fit for himſelf. Chriſt valueth us by what we ſhall be, and by what we are elected unto. We call a little plant a tree, becauſe it is growing up to be ſo. *Who is he that deſpiſeth the day of little things?* Zech. 4. Chriſt would not have us deſpiſe little things.

The glorious Angels diſdain not attendance on little ones: little in their own eyes, little in the eyes of the world. Grace, though little in quantity, yet is much in vigour and worth.

It is Chriſt that raiſeth the worth of little and mean places and perſons. Bethlem the leaſt, and yet not the leaſt; the leaſt in itſelf; not the leaſt, in reſpect Chriſt was born there. The ſecond Temple came ſhort of the outward magnificence of the former: yet more glorious than the firſt, becauſe Chriſt came into it. The Lord of the Temple came into his own Temple. The pupil of the eye is very little, yet ſeeth a great part of the heaven at once. A pearl, though little, yet is of much eſteem. Nothing in the world of ſo good uſe, as the leaſt drop of grace.

But grace is not only little, but mingled with corruption; whereof it is that a Chriſtian is ſaid to be ſmoaking flax: whence we ſee, that "grace doth not waſte corruption all at once, but "ſome is left to conflict withal." The pureſt actions of the pureſt men need Chriſt to perform them, and ſo is his office.

When we pray, we need to pray again for Chriſt, to pardon the defects of them. See ſome inſtances of this ſmoaking flax: Moſes at the Red Sea being in great perplexity, and knowing not what to ſay, or which way to turn him, groaned to God: no doubt, this was a great conflict in him. In great diſtreſſes we know not what to pray, but the ſpirit makes requeſt with ſighs that cannot be expreſſed. Rom. iii. Broken hearts can yield but broken prayers.

When David was before the king of Gath, and diſfigured himſelf in an uncomely manner, in that ſmoak there was ſome fire alſo; you may ſee what an excellent pſalm he makes upon that occaſion, Pſ. xxxiv. wherein upon experience, ver. 18. he ſaith, *the Lord is near unto them that are of a contrite ſpirit.* Pſ. xxxi. 22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am caſt out of thy ſight*, there is ſmoak; *yet thou heardeſt the voice of my prayer*, there is fire. Mark ix. 24. *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* (cry the diſciples,) here is ſmoke of unbelief, yet ſo much light of faith, as ſtirred them up to pray to Chriſt: *Lord I believe*, there is light; but *help my unbelief*, there is ſmoke.

Jonah ii. 4. cries, *I am caſt out of thy ſight*, there is ſmoke; *yet will I look again to thy holy Temple*, there is light.

O miſerable man that I am, (ſaith Saint Paul, Rom. vii. 24. upon ſenſe of his corruption;) but yet breaks out into *thanks to God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

I ſleep (ſaith the Church, Cant. v. 3.) *but my heart wakes.* In the ſeven churches, which for their light are called ſeven golden candleſticks, moſt of them had much ſmoke with their light, Rev. ii. 3.

The ground of this mixture is, that we carry about us a double principle, grace and nature. The end of it is eſpecially to preſerve us from thoſe two dangerous rocks our natures are prone to daſh upon, ſecurity and pride, and to force us to pitch our reſt on juſtification, not ſanctification, which beſides imperfection hath ſome ſoil.

Our ſpiritual fire, is like our ordinary fire here below, mixed. But fire is moſt pure in its own element, above: ſo ſhall all our graces be, when we are where we would be, in Heaven, which is our proper element. Uſe.—From this mixture it is that the people of God have ſo different judgements of themſelves, looking ſometimes at the work of grace, ſometimes at the remainder of corruption; and when they look upon that, then they think they

they have no grace: though they love Chriſt in his ordinances, and children; yet dare not challenge ſo near acquaintance as to be his. Even as a candle in the ſocket ſometimes ſheweth its light, and ſometimes the ſhew of light is loſt: ſo ſometimes they are well perſuaded of themſelves, ſometimes at a loſs.

Now for the ſecond obſervation, "Chriſt will not quench the "ſmoaking flax." Firſt, becauſe this ſpark is from heaven, it is his own, it is kindled by his own ſpirit. And ſecondly, that it tendeth to the glory of his powerful grace in his children, that he preſerveth light in the midſt of darkneſs, a ſpark in the midſt of the ſwelling waters of corruption.

There is an eſpecial bleſſing in that little ſpark. Iſ. lvi. 8. *When wine is found in a cluſter, one ſaith, deſtroy it not, for there is a bleſſing in it.* We ſee how our Saviour Chriſt bore with Thomas in his doubting: with the two diſciples that went to Emaus, who ſtaggered, whether he came to redeem Iſrael or not: he quenched not that little light in Peter, which was ſmothered: Peter denied him, but he denied not Peter. *If thou wilt, thou canſt*, ſaid one poor man in the Goſpel: Matt. viii. *Lord, if thou canſt*, ſaith another; both were this ſmoaking flax, neither of both were quenched. If Chriſt had ſtood upon his own greatneſs, he would have rejected him that came with his *if*, but Chriſt anſwers his *if* with a gracious and abſolute grant, *I will, be thou clean.* The woman that was diſeaſed with an iſſue, did but touch, and with a trembling hand, and but the hem of his garment, and yet went away both healed and comforted. Rev. ii. 3. In the ſeven churches we ſee he acknowledgeth and cheriſheth any thing that was good in them. Matt. xxvi. Becauſe the diſciples ſlept from infirmity, being oppreſſed with grief, our Saviour Chriſt frameth a comfortable excuſe for them, *the ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weak.*

If Chriſt ſhould not be merciful, he would miſs of his own ends; *there is mercy with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* Now all are willing to come under that banner of love which he ſpreadeth over his people. *Therefore to thee ſhall all fleſh come*, Pſ. lxv. He uſeth moderation and care, *leſt the ſpirit ſhould fail before him, and the ſouls which he hath made*, Iſ. lvii. Chriſt's heart yerned, the text ſaith, when he ſaw them without meat, leſt they ſhould faint: much more will he have regard for the preventing of our ſpiritual faintings.

Here ſee the oppoſite diſpoſition between the holy nature of Chriſt, and the impure nature of man. Man for a little ſmoke

will quench the light: Chriſt we ſee ever cheriſheth even the leaſt beginnings. How bare he with the many imperfections of his poor diſciples? If he did ſharply check them, it was in love, and that they might ſhine the brighter. Can we have a better pattern to follow, than this of him by whom we hope to be ſaved? Rom. xv. 1. *We that are ſtrong ought to bear with the infirmities of them that are weak.* 'I become all things to all men, 'that I may win ſome.' 1 Cor. ix. O that this gaining and winning diſpoſition were more in many! Many (ſo far as in us lieth) are loſt for want of encouragement. See how that faithful fiſher of men St. Paul, labours to catch his judge, *I know thou believeſt the prophets;* and then wiſheth all ſaving good, but not bonds; he might have added them too, but he would not diſcourage one that made but an offer; he would therefore wiſh Agrippa only that which was good in religion. How careful was our bleſſed Saviour of little ones, that they might not be offended? How doth he defend his diſciples from malicious imputations of the Phariſees? How careful not to put new wine into old veſſels, not to alienate new beginners with the auſterities of religion (as ſome do indiſcreetly.) O (ſaith he) they ſhall have time to faſt when I am gone, and ſtrength to faſt when the Holy Ghoſt is come upon them. Matth. ix.

It is not the beſt way to fall foul preſently with young beginners for ſome leſſer vanities, but ſhew them a more excellent way, and breed them up in poſitive grounds, and other things will be quickly out of credit with them. It is not amiſs to conceal their wants, to excuſe ſome failings, to commend their performances, to cheriſh their forwardneſs, to remove all rubs out of their way, to help them every way, to bear the yoke of religion with greater eaſe, to bring them in love with God and his ſervice, leſt they diſtaſte it before they know it. For the moſt part we ſee Chriſt planteth in young beginners a love, which we call the *firſt love*, to carry them through their profeſſion with more delight, and doth not expoſe them to croſſes, before they have gathered ſtrength, as we breed up young plants, and fence them from the weather, until they be well rooted. Mercy to others ſhould move us to deny ourſelves in our lawful liberties often times; in caſe of offence of weak ones, it is the little ones that are offended. The weakeſt are apt to think themſelves deſpiſed, therefore we ſhould be moſt careful to give them content.

It were a good ſtrife among Chriſtians, one to labour to give no

no offence, and the other to labour to take none. The beſt men are ſevere to themſelves, tender over others.

Yet people ſhould not tire and wear out the patience of others; nor ſhould the weaker ſo far exact moderation from others, as to bear out themſelves upon their indulgence, and ſo to reſt in their own infirmities, with danger to their own ſouls, and ſcandal to the church. The church ſuffereth much from weak ones, therefore we may challenge liberty to deal with them, as mildly, ſo oftentimes directly. The ſcope of true love, is to make the party better, which by concealment oftentimes is hindered: with ſome a ſpirit of meekneſs prevaileth moſt, but with ſome a rod. Some muſt be pulled out of the fire with violence, and they will bleſs God for us in the day of their viſitation. Matt. xxiii. We ſee, our Saviour multiplies woe upon woe, when he was to deal with hard-hearted hypocrites; for hypocrites do need ſtronger conviction than groſs ſinners, becauſe their will is naught, and thereupon uſually their converſion is violent. An hard knot muſt have an anſwerable wedge, elſe in a cruel pity we betray their ſouls. A ſharp reproof ſometimes is a precious pearl, and a ſweet balm. The wounds of ſecure ſinners will not be healed with ſweet words. The Holy Ghoſt came as well in fiery tongues, as in the likeneſs of a dove, and the ſame holy Spirit will vouchſafe a ſpirit of prudence and diſcretion, (which is the ſalt to ſeaſon all our words and actions.) And ſuch wiſdom will teach us to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon both to the weary, and likewiſe to the ſecure ſoul. And indeed he had need have the tongue of the learned that ſhall either raiſe up, or caſt down: but in this place I ſpeak of mildneſs towards thoſe that are weak, and are ſenſible of it: theſe we muſt bring on gently, and drive ſoftly, as Jacob did his cattle, according to the pace, and as his children were able to endure.

Weak Chriſtians are like glaſſes, which are hurt with the leaſt violent uſage, otherwiſe if gently handled will continue a long time. This honour of gentle uſe we are to give to the weaker veſſels, by which we ſhall both preſerve them, and likewiſe make them uſeful to the church and ourſelves.

In unclean bodies, if all ill humours be purged out, you ſhall purge life and all away. Therefore though God ſaith, Zach. xiii. 9. that *he will fine them as ſilver is fined*; yet Iſa. xlviii. 10. he ſaith, *He hath fined them, but not as ſilver*, that is, ſo exactly as that no droſs remaineth, for he hath reſpect to our weakneſs.

Perfect refining is for another world, for the world of the ſouls of perfect men.

Divines had need to take heed therefore how they deal with theſe in divers particulars; as firſt, let them be careful they ſtrain not things too high, making thoſe general and neceſſary evidences of grace which agree not to the experience of many a good Chriſtian, and lay ſalvation and damnation upon thoſe things that are not fit to bear ſo great a weight, whereupon men are groundleſly caſt down lower by them, than they can haſtily be raiſed up again by themſelves or others. The ambaſſadors of ſo gentle a Saviour ſhould not be over maſterly, ſetting up themſelves in the hearts of people, where Chriſt alone ſhould ſit as in his own temple. How careful was St Paul in caſes of conſcience, not to lay a ſnare upon any weak conſcience!

They ſhould take heed likewiſe, that they hide not their meaning in dark ſpeeches, ſpeaking in the clouds. Truth feareth nothing ſo much as concealment, and deſireth nothing ſo much as clearly to be laid open to the view of all. When it is moſt naked, it is moſt lovely and powerful.

Our bleſſed Saviour, as he took our nature upon him, ſo he took upon him our familiar manner of ſpeech, which was part of his voluntary abaſement. St Paul was a profound man, yet he became as a nurſe to the weaker ſort.

That ſpirit of mercy that was in Chriſt ſhould move his ſervants to be content to abaſe themſelves for the good of the meaneſt. What made the kingdom of heaven ſuffer violence after John the Baptiſt's time, but that comfortable truths were with that plainneſs and evidence laid open, that the people were ſo affected with them, that they offered a holy violence to them?

Chriſt choſe thoſe to preach mercy, which had felt moſt mercy, as St Peter and St Paul; that they might be examples of what they taught. St Paul became all things to all men, ſtooping unto them for their good; Chriſt came down from heaven, and emptied himſelf of majeſty, in tender love to ſouls: ſhall not we come down from our high conceits, to do any poor ſoul good? ſhall man be proud, after God hath been humble? We ſee the miniſters of Satan turn themſelves into all ſhapes to make proſelytes. A Jeſuit will be every man. We ſee ambitious men ſtudy to accommodate themſelves to the humours of thoſe by whom they hope to raiſe themſelves; and ſhall not we ſtudy application of ourſelves to Chriſt, by whom we hope to be advanced;

advanced; nay, are already ſitting with him in heavenly places? After we are gained to Chriſt ourſelves, we ſhould labour to gain others to Chriſt. Holy ambition and covetouſneſs will move us to put upon ourſelves the diſpoſition of Chriſt, but we muſt put off ourſelves firſt.

We ſhould not, thirdly, rack their wits with curious or doubtful diſputes, for ſo we ſhall diſtract and tire them, and give occaſion to make them caſt off the care of all. That age of the church which was moſt fertile in nice queſtions, was moſt barren in religion. For it makes people think religion to be only a matter of wit, in tying and untying of knots; the brains of men given that way are hotter uſually than their hearts. Yet notwithſtanding, when we are caſt into times and places wherein doubts are raiſed about main points, here people ought to labour to be eſtabliſhed. God ſuffers queſtions oftentimes to ariſe for trial of our love, and exerciſe of our parts. Nothing is ſo certain as that which is certain after doubts. Shaking ſettles and roots. In a contentious age, it is a wiſe thing to be a chriſtian, and to know what to pitch their ſouls upon. It is an office of love here to take away the ſtones, and to ſmooth the way to heaven. Therefore we muſt take heed, that under pretence of avoiding diſputes, we do not ſuffer an adverſe party to get ground upon the truth: for thus we may eaſily betray both the truth of God, and the ſouls of men.

And likewiſe, fourthly, thoſe are failing, that by overmuch auſterity drive back troubled ſouls from having comfort by them, for by this carriage many ſmother their temptations, and burn inwardly, becauſe they have none into whoſe boſom they may vent their grief, and eaſe their ſouls.

We muſt neither bind where God looſeth, nor looſe where God bindeth, nor open where God ſhutteth, nor ſhut where God openeth; the right uſe of the keys is always ſucceſsful. In perſonal application there muſt be great heed taken; for a man may be a falſe prophet, and yet ſpeak the truth, if it be not a truth to the perſon to whom he ſpeaketh: if he grieve thoſe whom God hath not grieved, by unſeaſonable truths, or by comforts in an ill way, the hearts of the wicked may be ſtrengthened. One man's meat may be another's poiſon.

If we look to the general temper of theſe times, rouſing and wakening ſcriptures are fitteſt; yet there be many broken ſpirits need ſoft and oily words. Even in the worſt time the prophets mingled ſweet comfort for the hidden remnant of faithful peo-

ple. God hath comfort; Comfort ye my people, as well as lift up thy voice as a trumpet.

And here likewiſe there needs a caution. Mercy doth not rob us of our right judgement, as that we ſhould take ſmoaking firebrands for ſmoaking flax; none will claim mercy more of others, than thoſe whoſe portion is due ſeverity. This example doth not countenance lukewarmneſs, nor too much indulgence to thoſe that need quickning. Cold diſeaſes muſt have hot remedies. It made for the juſt commendation of the church of Epheſus, that it could not bear them which are evil. We ſhould ſo bear with others, as to diſcover withal a diſlike of evil. Our Saviour Chriſt would not forbear ſharp reproof, where he ſaw dangerous infirmities, in his moſt beloved diſciples. It bringeth under a curſe to do the work of the Lord negligently: even where it is a work of juſt ſeverity; as when it is ſheathing the ſword in the bowels of the enemy. And thoſe whom we ſuffer to be betrayed by their worſt enemies, their ſins, will have juſt cauſe to curſe us another day.

It is hard to preſerve juſt bounds of mercy and ſeverity, without a ſpirit above our own; which we ought to deſire to be led withal in all things. That wiſdom which dwelleth with prudence will guide us in theſe particulars, without which virtue is not virtue, truth not truth. The rule and the caſe muſt be laid together: for if there be not a narrow inſight, ſeeming likeneſs in conditions will be the breeder of errors in our opinions of them. Thoſe fiery, tempeſtuous, and deſtructive ſpirits in Popery, that ſeek to promote their religion by cruelty, ſhew that they are ſtrangers to that wiſdom which is from above, which maketh men gentle, peaceable, and ready to ſhew that mercy they themſelves have felt before. It is a way of prevailing, as agreeable to Chriſt, ſo likewiſe to man's nature, to prevail by forbearance and moderation.

And yet oft we ſee a falſe ſpirit in thoſe that call for moderation; it is but to carry their own projects with the greater ſtrength, and if they prove on the prevailing hand, they will hardly ſhew that moderation to others, they now call for from others. And there is a proud kind of moderation likewiſe, when men will take upon them to cenſure either party, as if they were wiſer than both, though if the ſpirit be right, a looker-on may ſee more than thoſe that are engaged.

So in the cenſures of the church, it is more ſuitable to the Spirit

rit of Chriſt to incline to the milder part; and not to kill a fly on the forehead with a beetle; nor ſhut men out of heaven for a trifle. The very ſnuffers of the tabernacle were made of pure gold, to ſhew the purity of thoſe cenſures, whereby the light of the church is kept bright. That power that is given to the church, is given for edification, not deſtruction. How careful was St Paul, that the inceſtuous Corinthian repenting, ſhould not be ſwallowed up with too much grief?

As for civil magiſtrates, they for civil exigencies and reaſons of ſtate, muſt let the law have its courſe; yet thus far they ſhould imitate this mild king, as not to mingle bitterneſs and paſſion with authority derived from God. Authority is a beam of God's majeſty, and prevaileth moſt where there is leaſt mixture of that which is man's. It requireth more than ordinary wiſdom to manage it aright. This ſtring muſt not be too much ſtrained up, nor too much let looſe. Juſtice is an harmonical thing. Herbs hot or cold beyond a certain degree kill. We ſee even contrary elements preſerved in one body by a wiſe contemperation. Juſtice in rigour is oft extreme injuſtice, where ſome conſiderable circumſtances ſhould incline to moderation, and the reckoning will be eaſier for bending rather to moderation than rigour.

Inſolent carriage towards miſerable perſons, if humbled, is unſeemly in any who look for mercy themſelves. Miſery ſhould be a loadſtone of mercy, not a footſtool for pride to trample on.

Sometimes it falleth out that thoſe that are under the government of others are moſt injurious by their waywardneſs and harſh cenſures, herein diſparaging and diſcouraging the endeavours of ſuperiors for public good. In ſo great weakneſs of man's nature, and eſpecially in this crazy age of the world, we ought to take in good part, any moderate happineſs we enjoy by government; and not be altogether as a nail in the wound, exaſperating things by miſconſtruction. Here, love ſhould have a mantle to caſt upon leſſer errors of thoſe above us. Oftimes the poor man is the oppreſſor by unjuſt clamours: we ſhould labour to give the beſt interpretations to the actions of governors, that the nature of the actions will poſſibly bear.

In the laſt place, there is ſomething for private Chriſtians, even for all of us, in our common relations, to take notice of: we are debtors to the weak in many things. 1. Let us be watchful

ful in the uſe of our liberty, and labour to be inoffenſive in our carriage, that our example compel them not. There is a commanding force in an example, as Peter, Gal. ii. A looſeneſs of life is cruelty to ourſelves, and to the ſouls of others, though we cannot keep them from periſhing, which will periſh, in regard of the event; yet if we do that which is apt of itſelf to deſtroy the ſouls of others, their ruin is imputable to us.

2. Let men take heed of taking up Satan's office, in ſlandering the good actions of others, as he did Job's, *Doth he serve God for nought?* or ſlandering their perſons, judging of them according to the wickedneſs that is in their own hearts. The devil getteth more by ſuch diſcouragements, and theſe reproaches that are caſt upon religion, than by fire and faggot. Theſe (like unſeaſonable froſts) nip all gracious offers in the bud, and as much as in them lieth, with Herod labour to kill Chriſt in young profeſſors. A Chriſtian is a hallowed and a ſacred thing, Chriſt's temple; and *he that destroyeth his temple, him will Christ destroy.*

3. Amongſt the things that are to be taken heed of, there is amongſt private Chriſtians a bold uſurpation of cenſure, not conſidering their temptations. Some will unchurch and unbrother in a paſſion, but diſtempers do not alter true relations; though the child in a fit ſhould diſclaim the mother, yet the mother will not diſclaim the child.

There is therefore in theſe judging times good ground for St. James his caution, that there ſhould not be too many maſters; that we ſhould not ſmite one another, by haſty cenſures, eſpecially in things of an indifferent nature: ſome things are as the mind of him is, that doth them, or doth them not; for both may be unto the Lord.

A holy aim in things of a middle nature, makes the judgements of men, although ſeemingly contrary, yet not ſo much blameable. Chriſt, for the good aims he ſeeth in us, over-looketh any ill in them, ſo far as not to lay it to our charge.

Men muſt not be too curious in prying into the weakneſs of others; we ſhould labour rather to ſee what they have that is for eternity, to incline our heart to love them, than into that weakneſs which the Spirit of God will in time conſume, to eſtrange us;—ſome think it ſtrength of grace to endure nothing in the weaker, whereas the ſtrongeſt are readieſt to bear with the infirmities of the weak. Where moſt holineſs is, there is moſt moderation, where it may be without prejudice of piety to God and the good of

of others. We ſee in Chriſt a marvellous temper of abſolute holineſs, with great moderation, in this text. What had become of our ſalvation, if he had ſtood upon terms, and not ſtooped thus low, unto us! We need not affect to be more holy than Chriſt, it is no flattery to do as he doth, ſo it be to edification.

The Holy Ghoſt is content to dwell in ſmoaky offenſive ſouls. Oh that, that ſpirit would breathe into our ſpirits the like merciful diſpoſition! We endure the bitterneſs of wormwood, and other diſtaſteful plants and herbs, only becauſe we have ſome experience of a wholeſome quality in them; and why ſhould we reject men of uſeful parts, and graces, only for ſome harſhneſs of diſpoſition, which as it is offenſive to us, ſo grieveth themſelves?

Grace whilſt we live here, is in ſouls, which as they are unperfectly renewed, ſo they dwell in bodies ſubject to ſeveral humours, which will incline the ſoul ſometimes to exceſs in one paſſion, ſometimes to exceſs in another.

Bucer was a deep, and a moderate divine. Upon long experience he reſolved to refuſe none, in whom he ſaw ſomething of Chriſt.

The beſt Chriſtians in this ſtate of imperfection, are like gold that is a little too light, which needs ſome grains of allowance to make it paſs. You muſt grant the beſt their allowance.—We muſt ſupply out of our love and mercy, that which we ſee wanting in them.

The church of Chriſt is a common hoſpital, wherein all are in ſome meaſure ſick of ſome ſpiritual diſeaſe, or other; that we ſhould all have ground of exerciſing mutually the ſpirit of wiſdom and meekneſs.

This that we may the better do, let us put upon ourſelves the ſpirit of Chriſt: the ſpirit of God carrieth a majeſty with it. Corruption will hardly yield to corruption. In another, pride is intolerable to pride. The weapons of this warfare muſt not be carnal. The great apoſtles would not ſet upon the work of the miniſtry, untill they were cloathed as it were, with power from on high. The Spirit will only work with his own tools. And we ſhould think what affection Chriſt would carry to the party in this caſe. That great Phyſician, as he had a quick eye, and a healing tongue, ſo had he a gentle hand and a tender heart.

2.

2. And ſecondly, put upon us the condition of him, whom we deal withal, we are, or have been, or may be ſuch: make the caſe our own, and withal conſider in what near relation a Chriſtian ſtandeth unto us, even as a brother, a fellow-member, heir of the ſame ſalvation: And therefore let us take upon ourſelves, a tender care of them every way: and eſpecially in cheriſhing the peace of their conſciences. Conſcience is a tender and delicate thing, and ſo muſt be uſed. It is like a lock, if the wards be troubled, it will be troubleſome to open.

Uſe.—For trial, to let us ſee whether we be this ſmoaking flax, which Chriſt will not quench. In this trial remember theſe rules.

1. We muſt have two eyes, one to ſee imperfections in ourſelves and others; the other to ſee what is good. I am black, ſaith the church, but yet comely. Thoſe ever want comfort, that are much in quarrelling with themſelves, and through their infirmities are prone to feed upon ſuch bitter things, as will moſt nouriſh that diſtemper they are ſick of. Theſe delight to be looking on the dark ſide of the cloud only.

2. We muſt not judge of ourſelves always according to preſent feeling: for in temptations we ſhall ſee nothing but ſmoke of diſtruſtful thoughts. Fire may be raked up in aſhes, though not ſeen; life in the winter is hid in the root.

3. Take heed of falſe reaſoning; as becauſe our fire doth not blaze out like others, therefore we have no fire at all, and by falſe concluſions come to ſin againſt the commandment in bearing falſe witneſs againſt ourſelves. The prodigal would not ſay he was no ſon, but that he was not worthy to be called a ſon. We muſt neither truſt to falſe evidence, nor deny true; for ſo we ſhould diſhonour the work of God's Spirit in us, and loſe the help of that evidence which would cheriſh our love to Chriſt, and arm us againſt Satan's diſcouragements. Some are ſo faulty this way, as if they had been hired by ſatan the accuſer of the brethren, to plead for him, in accuſing themſelves.

4. Know (for a ground of this) that in the covenant of grace, God requires the truth of grace, not any certain meaſure, and a ſpark of fire is fire as well as the whole element. Therefore we muſt look to grace in the ſpark as well as in the flame. All have not the like ſtrong, yet the like precious faith, whereby they lay hold, and put on the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt.—A weak hand may receive a rich jewel; a few grapes will ſhew that

that the plant is a vine, and not a thorn. It is one thing to be wanting in grace, and another thing to want grace altogether. God knoweth we have nothing of ourſelves, therefore in the covenant of grace he requireth no more than he giveth, and giveth what he requireth, and accepteth what he giveth; "*he "that hath not a lamb, may bring a pair of turtle doves.*" What is the goſpel itſelf but a merciful moderation, in which Chriſt's obedience is eſteemed ours, and our ſins laid upon him; and wherein God of a Judge becometh a Father, pardoning our ſins, and accepting our obedience, though feeble and blemiſhed. We are now brought to heaven under the covenant of grace, by a way of love and mercy.

It will prove a ſpecial help to know diſtinctly the difference between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, between Moſes and Chriſt: Moſes without all mercy, breaketh all bruiſed reeds, and quencheth all ſmoaking flax. For the law requireth, 1. perſonal, 2. perpetual, 3. perfect obedience, 4. and from a perfect heart; and that under a moſt terrible curſe, and giveth no ſtrength, a ſevere taſk-maſter, like Pharoah's, requireth the whole tale, and yet giveth no ſtraw. Chriſt cometh with bleſſing after bleſſing, even upon thoſe whom Moſes had curſed, and with healing balm for thoſe wounds which Moſes had made.

The ſame duties are required in both covenants, as, 'to love 'the Lord with all our hearts, with all our ſouls,' &c. In this covenant of works, this muſt be taken in the rigour; but under the covenant of grace, as it is a ſincere endeavour proportionable to grace received; and ſo it muſt be underſtood of Joſias, and others, when it is ſaid, they loved God with all their hearts, &c. It muſt have an evangelical mitigation.

The law is ſweetened by the goſpel, and becometh delightful to the inner man. Under this gracious covenant ſincerity is perfection. This is the death in the pot in the Romiſh religion, that they confound two covenants; and it deadens the comfort of drooping ones, that they cannot diſtinguiſh them. And thus they ſuffer themſelves to be held under bondage, when Chriſt hath ſet them free; and ſtay themſelves in the priſon, when Chriſt hath ſet open the doors before them.

5. Grace ſometimes is ſo little, as is undiſcernable to us; the Spirit ſometimes hath ſecret operations in us, which we know not for the preſent, but Chriſt knoweth. Sometimes in bitterneſs of temptation, when the Spirit ſtruggles with ſenſe of God's anger,

anger, we are apt to think God an enemy; and a troubled ſoul is like troubled waters, we can ſee nothing in it; and ſo far as it is not cleanſed, it will caſt up mire and dirt. It is full of objections againſt itſelf, yet for the moſt part we may diſcern ſomething of this hidden life, and of theſe ſmothered ſparks.

In a gloomy day there is ſo much light whereby we may know it to be day, and not night; ſo there is ſomething in a Chriſtian under a cloud, whereby he may be diſcerned to be a true believer, and not an hypocrite. There is no mere darkneſs in the ſtate of grace, but ſome beam of light, whereby the kingdom of darkneſs wholly prevaileth not.

Theſe things premiſed, let us know for a trial—

Firſt, if there be any holy fire in us, it is kindled from heaven by the Father of lights, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs. As it is kindled in the uſe of means, ſo it is fed. The light in us, and the light in the word, ſpring one from the other, and both from one Holy Spirit; and therefore thoſe that regard not the word, it is becauſe there is no light in them. Heavenly truths muſt have a heavenly light to diſcern them. Natural men ſee heavenly things, but not in their own proper light, but by an inferior light. God in every converted man putteth a light into the eye of his ſoul, proportionable to the light of truths revealed unto them. A carnal eye will never ſee ſpiritual things.

Secondly, the leaſt divine light hath heat with it in ſome meaſure: light in the underſtanding breedeth heat of love in the affections. In what meaſure the ſanctified underſtanding ſeeth a thing to be true, or good, in that meaſure the will embraces it. Weak light, breeds weak inclinations: a ſtrong light, ſtrong inclinations. A little ſpiritual light is of ſtrength enough to anſwer ſtrong objections of fleſh and blood; and to look through all earthly allurements, and all oppoſing hindrances, preſenting them as far inferior to thoſe heavenly objects it vieweth.

All light that is not ſpiritual, becauſe it wanteth the ſtrength of ſanctifying grace, it yieldeth to every little temptation, eſpecially when it is fitted and ſuited to perſonal inclinations. This is the reaſon why Chriſtians that have light little for quantity, but yet heavenly for quality, hold out, when men of larger apprehenſions ſink.

This prevailing of light in the ſoul, is, becauſe together with a ſpirit of illumination, there goeth (in the godly) a ſpirit of power,

to

to ſubdue the heart to truth revealed, and to put a taſte and reliſh into the will, ſuitable to the ſweetneſs of the truths, elſe a mere natural will riſes againſt ſupernatural truths, as having an antipathy and enmity againſt them. In the godly, holy truths are conveyed by way of a taſte, gracious men have a ſpiritual palate as well as a ſpiritual eye. Grace altereth the reliſh.

Thirdly, where this heavenly light is kindled, it directeth in the right way. For it is given for that uſe, to ſhew us the beſt way, and to guide in the particular paſſages of life: if otherwiſe, it is but common light, given only for the good of others. Some have light of knowledge, yet follow not that light, but are guided by carnal reaſon and policy; ſuch as the prophet ſpeaks of, Iſ. l. 11. 'All you that kindle a fire, walk in the light of 'your own fire, and in the ſparks that you have kindled; but 'this you ſhall have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.' God delights to confound carnal wiſdom, as enmity to him, and robbing him of his prerogative, who is God only wiſe. We muſt therefore walk by his light, and not the blaze of our own fire. God muſt light our candle, Pſ. xviii. 28. or elſe we are like to abide in darkneſs. Thoſe ſparks that are not kindled from heaven, are not ſtrong enough to keep us from lying down in ſorrow, though they make a greater blaze and ſhew than the light from above, as madmen do greater things than ſober, but by a falſe ſtrength: ſo the exceſs of theſe mens joy ariſeth from a falſe light: 'the candle of the wicked ſhall be put out.'

The light that ſome men have, it is like lightning, which after a ſudden flaſh leaveth them more in darkneſs. They can love the light as it ſhines, but hate it as it diſcovers, and directs. A little holy light will enable to keep the word, and not to betray religion, and deny Chriſt's name, as Chriſt ſpeaketh of the Church of Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 8.

Fourthly, where this fire is, it will ſever things of divers natures, and ſhew a difference between things, as gold and droſs. It will ſever between fleſh and ſpirit, and ſhew that this is of nature, that of grace. All is not ill in a bad action, or good in a good action. There is gold in ore, which God and his Spirit in us can diſtinguiſh. A carnal man's heart is like a dungeon, wherein is nothing to be ſeen but horror and confuſion: this light maketh us judicious and humble, upon clearer ſight of God's purity, and our own uncleanneſs: and maketh us able to diſcern the work of the Spirit in another.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, ſo far as a man is ſpiritual, ſo far is light delightful unto him, as willing to ſee any thing amiſs, that he may reform, and any further ſervice diſcovered, that he may perform: becauſe he truly hateth ill and loveth good: if he goeth againſt light diſcovered, he will ſoon be reclaimed, becauſe light hath a friendly party within him. Whereupon, at a little ſight of his error, he is ſoon counſellable, as David in his intending to kill Nabal, and bleſſeth God afterwards when he is ſtopped in an ill way.

In a carnal man the light breaks in upon him, but he labours to ſhut the paſſages, he hath no delight to come to the light. It is impoſſible, before the ſpirit of grace hath ſubdued the heart, but that it ſhould ſin againſt the light, either by reſiſting of it, or keeping it priſoner under baſe luſts, and bury it as it were in the earth; or perverting of it, and ſo making it an agent and factor for the fleſh, in ſearching out arguments to plead for it, or abuſing that little meaſure of light they have, to keep out a greater, higher, and more heavenly light, and ſo at length make that light they have, a miſleading guide to utter darkneſs. And the reaſon is, that it hath no friend within, the ſoul is in a contrary frame, and light always hindereth that ſinful peace that men are willing to ſpeak to themſelves, whence we ſee it oft enrage men the more: as the ſun in the ſpring breedeth aguiſh diſtempers, becauſe it ſtirreth humours, and doth not waſte them. There is nothing in the world more unquiet, than the heart of a wicked man, that ſitteth under means of knowledge, until like a thief he hath put out the candle, that he may ſin with the leſs check. Spiritual light is diſtinct, it ſeeth ſpiritual good, with application to ourſelves; but common light is confuſed, and lets ſin lie quiet. Where fire is in any degree, it will fight againſt the contrary matter: God hath put irreconcilable hatred between light and darkneſs at firſt, ſo between good and ill, fleſh and ſpirit. Grace will never join with ſin, no more than fire with water. Fire will mingle with no contrary, but preſerveth its own purity, and is never corrupted, as other elements are. Therefore thoſe that plead and plot for liberties of the fleſh, ſhew themſelves ſtrangers from the life of God. Upon this ſtrife gracious men oft complain that they have no grace, but they contradict themſelves in their complaints: as if a man that ſeeth, ſhould complain he cannot ſee, or complain that he is aſleep, when the very complaint ſpringing from a diſpleaſure againſt ſin, ſheweth that there is ſomething in him oppoſite to ſin. Can a dead man complain? ſome things, though bad in themſelves, yet diſcover good; as ſmoke diſ-

diſcovers ſome fire. Breaking out in the body ſhews ſtrength of nature. Some infirmities diſcover more good than ſome ſeeming beautiful actions; exceſs of paſſion in oppoſing evil, (though not to be juſtified) yet ſheweth a better ſpirit than a calm temper, when there is juſt cauſe of being moved. Better it is, that the water ſhould run ſomething muddily, than not at all. Job had more grace in his diſtempers, than his friends in their ſeeming wiſe carriage. Actions ſoiled with ſome weakneſſes, are more accepted than complimental performances.

Fire, where it is in the leaſt meaſure, is in ſome degree active; ſo the leaſt meaſure of grace is working, as ſpringing from the Spirit of God, which from the working nature of it, is compared to fire. Nay, in ſins, when there ſeemeth nothing active, but corruption, yet there is a contrary principle, which breaks the force of ſin, ſo that it is not out of meaſure ſinful, as in thoſe that are carnal.

7. Fire maketh metals pliable and malleable, ſo doth grace, where it is begun; it worketh the heart to be pliable and ready for all good impreſſions. Untractable ſpirits ſhew that they are not ſo much as ſmoaking flax.

8. Fire turneth all, as much as it can, to fire; ſo grace maketh a gracious uſe even of natural and civil things, and doth ſpiritualize them. What another man doth only civilly, a gracious man will do holily.

9. Sparks by nature fly upwards; ſo the ſpirit of grace carrieth the ſoul heaven-ward, and ſetteth before us holy and heavenly aims; as it was kindled from heaven, ſo it carries us back to heaven. The part followeth the whole; fire mounteth upwards, ſo every ſpark to its own element. Where the aim and bent of the goſpel is God-wards, there is grace, though oppoſed. The leaſt meaſure of it is holy deſires ſpringing from faith and love, for we cannot deſire any thing, which we do not believe firſt to be, and the deſire of it iſſues from love. Hence deſires are counted a part of the thing deſired in ſome meaſure, but then they muſt be, Firſt, conſtant, for conſtancy ſhews that they are ſupernaturally natural, and not inforced: Secondly, they muſt be carried to ſpiritual things, as to believe, to love God, &c. not out of a ſpecial exigent, becauſe if now they had grace, they think they might eſcape ſome danger, but as a loving heart is carried to the thing loved for some excellency in itſelf: And Thirdly, with deſire there is grief when it is hindered, which ſtirs up to prayer: "Oh that my ways were ſo directed, that I might keep thy

" ſtatutes!" Pſal. cxix. 5. " O miſerable man that I am, who " ſhall deliver?" &c. Rom. vii. 24. Fourthly, deſires put us onward ſtill; O that I might ſerve God with more liberty! O that I were more free from theſe offenſive, unſavoury, noiſome luſts!

Fire worketh itſelf (if it hath any matter to feed on) into a larger compaſs, and mounteth higher and higher, and the higher it riſeth, the purer is the flame: ſo where true grace is, it groweth in meaſure and purity. Smoaking flax will grow to a flame, and as it increaſeth, ſo it worketh out the contrary, and refineth itſelf more and more. Therefore it argueth a falſe heart to ſet ourſelves a meaſure in grace, and to reſt in beginnings; alledging, that Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax. But this merciful diſpoſition in Chriſt is joined with perfect holineſs, ſhewed in perfect hatred to ſin: for rather than ſin ſhould not have its deſerved puniſhment, himſelf became a ſacrifice for ſin, wherein his Father's holineſs and his own moſt of all ſhined. And beſides this, in the work of ſanctification, though he favours his work in us, yet favours he not ſin in us; for he will never take his hand from his work, until he hath taken away ſin even in its very being from our natures: the ſame ſpirit that purified that bleſſed maſs whereof he was made, cleanſeth us by degrees to be ſuitable to ſo holy a head, and frameth the judgment and affection of all to whom he ſheweth mercy, to concur with his own, in labouring to further his ends, in aboliſhing of ſin out of our nature.

Uſe.—From the meditations of theſe rules and ſigns, much comfort may be brought into the ſouls of the weakeſt; which that it may be in the more abundance, let me add ſomething for the helping them over ſome few ordinary objections, and ſecret thoughts againſt themſelves, which getting within the heart, oftentimes keep them under.

1. Some think they have no faith at all, becauſe they have no full aſſurance, when as the faireſt fire that can be will have ſome ſmoak. The beſt actions will ſmell of the ſmoak. The mortar wherein garlick hath been ſtamped, will always ſmell of it: ſo all our actions will ſavour ſomething of the old man.

2. In weakneſs of body ſome think grace dieth, becauſe their performances are feeble, their ſpirits, which are the inſtruments of the ſoul's actions, being waſted, not conſidering that God regards thoſe hidden ſighs of thoſe that want abilities to expreſs them out-

outwardly; he that pronounceth them bleſſed that conſider the poor, will have a merciful conſideration of ſuch himſelf.

3. Some again are haunted with hideous repreſentations to their fantaſies, and with vile and unworthy thoughts of God, of Chriſt, of the word, &c. which as buſy flies, diſquiet and moleſt their peace; theſe are caſt in like wild-fire by Satan, as may be diſcerned by the 1. ſtrangeneſs, 2. ſtrength and violence, 3. horribleneſs of them, even unto corrupt nature. A pious ſoul is no more guilty of them, than Benjamin of Joſeph's cup put into his ſack. Amongſt other helps preſcribed by godly writers (as abomination of them, and diverſion from them to other things, &c.) let this be one, to complain unto Chriſt againſt them, and to fly under the wings of his protection, and to deſire him to take our part againſt his and our enemies. Shall every ſin and blaſphemy of man be forgiven, and not theſe blaſphemous thoughts which have the devil for their father? When Chriſt himſelf was therefore moleſted in this kind, that he might ſuccour all poor ſouls in the like caſe.

4. Some think, when they begin once to be troubled with the ſmoak of corruption more than they were before, therefore they are worſe than they were. It is true, that corruptions appear now more than before, but they are leſs.

For 1. Sin, the more it is ſeen, the more it is hated, and thereupon is the leſs. Motes are in a room before the ſun ſhines, but then only they appear.

2. Contraries, the nearer they are one to another, the ſharper is the conflict betwixt them: now of all enemies the ſpirit and the fleſh are neareſt one to another, being both in the ſoul of a regenerate man, and in all faculties of the ſoul, and in every action that ſpringeth from thoſe faculties, and therefore it is no marvel the ſoul (the ſeat of this battle) thus divided in itſelf, be as ſmoaking flax.

3. The more grace, the more ſpiritual life, and the more ſpiritual life, the more antipathy to the contrary, whence none are ſo ſenſible of corruption, as thoſe that have the moſt living ſouls.

4. When men give themſelves up to carnal liberties, their corruptions trouble them not, as not being bounded and tied up. But when once grace ſuppreſſeth their extravagant and licentious exceſſes, then the fleſh boileth, (as diſdaining to be confined) yet they are better now than they were before. That matter whichyields ſmoak, was in the torch before it was lighted, but

it is not offenſive till the torch begins to burn. Let ſuch know, that if the ſmoak be once offenſive to them, it is a ſign that there is light. It is better to enjoy the benefit of light, though with ſmoak, than to be altogether in the dark.

Neither is ſmoak ſo offenſive, as light is comfortable to us, it yielding an evidence of truth of grace in the heart, therefore though it be cumberſome in the conflict, yet it is comfortable in the evidence. It is better corruption ſhould offend us now, than by giving way to it to redeem a little peace with loſs of comfort afterwards. Let ſuch therefore as are at variance and odds with their corruptions, look upon this text, as their portion of comfort.

Here is an uſe of encouragement to duty, that Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax, but blow it up. Some are loath to perform good duties, becauſe they feel their hearts rebelling, and duties come off untowardly. We ſhould not avoid good actions for the infirmities cleaving unto them: Chriſt looketh more at the good in them that he meaneth to cheriſh, than the ill in them that he meaneth to aboliſh. A ſick man, though in eating he ſomething increaſeth the diſeaſe, yet he will eat, that nature may get ſtrength againſt the diſeaſe: ſo though ſin cleaveth to what we do, yet let us do it, ſince we have to deal with ſo good a Lord, and the more ſtrife we meet withal, the more acceptance: Chriſt loveth to taſte of the good fruits that come from us, although they will always reliſh of the old ſtock.

A Chriſtian complaineth he cannot pray; O I am troubled with ſo many diſtracting thoughts, and never more than now. But, hath he put into thine heart a deſire to pray? he will hear the deſires of his own Spirit in thee. Rom. viii. 26. "We "know not what to pray for as we ought," (nor any thing elſe as we ought) "but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, with in- "expreſſible ſighs and groans," which are not hid from God. "My groanings are not hid from thee." God can pick ſenſe out of a confuſed prayer. Theſe deſires cry louder in his ears, than thy ſins. Sometimes a Chriſtian hath ſuch confuſed thoughts, he can ſay nothing, but as a child crieth, 'O Father,' not able to ſhew what it needs, as Moſes at the Red Sea.

Theſe ſtirrings of ſpirit touch the bowels of God, and melt him into compaſſion towards us, when they come from the ſpirit of adoption, and from a ſtriving to be better.

Objection.—Oh, but is it poſſible (thinketh the miſgiving heart) that ſo holy a God ſhould accept ſuch a prayer?

An-

Anſwer.—Yes, he will accept that which is his own, and pardon that which is ours. Jonas prayed in the whale's belly, being burdened with the guilt of ſin, yet God heareth him. Let not therefore infirmities diſcourage us. St James taketh away this objection, chap. v. 17.

Some might object, If I were as holy as Elias, then my prayers might be regarded: But (ſaith he) Elias was a man of like paſſions to us, he had his paſſions as well as we; for do we think that God heard him becauſe he was without fault? No ſurely. But look we to the promiſes, Pſal. l. 15. "Call upon me in the "day of trouble, and I will hear thee." Matt. vii. 7. "Aſk "and ye ſhall receive," and ſuch like: God accepteth our prayers, though weak, Firſt, becauſe we are his own children; they come from his own Spirit. Secondly, becauſe they are according to his own will. Thirdly, becauſe they are offered in Chriſt's mediation, and he takes them, and mingles them with his own odours. There is never a holy ſigh, never a tear we ſhed, loſt. And as every grace increaſeth by exerciſe of itſelf, ſo doth the grace of prayer; by prayer we learn to pray. So likewiſe we ſhould take heed of a ſpirit of diſcouragement in all other holy duties, ſince we have ſo gracious a Saviour. Pray as we are able, hear as we are able, ſtrive as we are able, do as we are able, according to the meaſure of grace received; God in Chriſt will caſt a gracious eye upon that which is his own.—Would St Paul do nothing, becauſe he could not do the good he would? Yes, he preſſed to the mark. Let us not be cruel to ourſelves, when Chriſt is thus gracious.

There is a certain meekneſs of ſpirit, whereby we yield thanks to God for any ability at all, and reſt quiet with the meaſure of grace received, ſeeing it is God's good pleaſure it ſhould be ſo, who giveth the will and the deed; yet ſo, as we reſt not from further endeavours. But, when upon faithful endeavour we come ſhort of what we would be, and ſhort of what others are, then know for our comfort, Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax, and that ſincerity and truth (as before was ſaid) with endeavour of growth, is our perfection. It is comfortable what God ſaith, 1 Kings xiv. 13. "He only ſhall go to his grave in "peace, becauſe there is ſome goodneſs;" though but ſome goodneſs: Lord, I believe with a weak faith, yet with faith; love thee with a faint love, yet with love; endeavour in a feeble manner, yet endeavour; a little fire is fire, though it ſmoaketh. Since thou haſt taken me into thy covenant, to be thine of an ene-

my, wilt thou caſt me off for theſe infirmities, which, as they diſpleaſe thee, ſo are they the grief of my own heart?

From what hath been ſpoken, with ſome little addition, it will not be difficult to reſolve that caſe which ſome require help in, namely, whether we ought to perform duties, our hearts being altogether indiſpoſed. For ſatisfaction, we muſt know,

1 Our hearts of themſelves do linger after liberty, and are hardly brought under the yoke of duty; and the more ſpiritual the duty is, the more is their untowardneſs. Corruption getteth ground for the moſt part, in every neglect, as it is in rowing againſt the tide, one ſtroke neglected will not be gained in three, and therefore it is good to keep our hearts cloſe to duty, and not to hearken unto the excuſes they are ready to frame.

2. In the ſetting upon duty, God ſtrengtheneth his own party that he hath in us: we find a warmneſs of heart, and increaſe of ſtrength, the Spirit going along with us, and raiſing us up by degrees, until it leaveth us as it were in heaven. God often delighteth to take the advantage of our indiſpoſition, that he may manifeſt his work the more clearly; that all the glory of the work may be his, whoſe all the ſtrength is.

3. Obedience is moſt direct, when there is nothing elſe to ſweeten the action; although the ſacrifice be imperfect, yet the obedience with which it is offered hath acceptance.

4. That which is won as a ſpoil from our corruptions, will have ſuch a degree of comfort afterwards, as for the preſent it hath of cumber. Feeling and freeneſs of ſpirit is oft reſerved until duty be diſcharged: reward followeth work. In and after duty, we find that experience of God's preſence, which without obedience we may long wait for, and yet go without. This hindereth not the Spirit's freedom in blowing upon our ſouls when it liſteth. For we ſpeak only of ſuch a ſtate of ſoul as is becalmed, and muſt row, as it were, againſt the ſtream. As in ſailing, the hand muſt be to the ſtern, and the eye to the ſtar: ſo here, put forth that little ſtrength we have to duty, and look up for aſſiſtance.

Yet in theſe duties that require, as well the body as the ſoul, there may be a ceſſation till ſtrength be repaired; whetting doth not hinder but fit. In ſudden paſſions there ſhould be a time to compoſe and calm the ſoul, and to put the ſtrings in tune. The prophet would have a minſtrel to bring his ſoul into frame.

So

So likewiſe we are ſubject to diſcouragements in ſufferings, by reaſon of impatience in us: alas, I ſhall never get through ſuch a croſs. But if God bring us into the croſs, he will be with us in the croſs, and at length bring us out more refined. We ſhall leave nothing but droſs, as in Zech. xiii. 9. Of our own ſtrength we cannot bear the leaſt trouble, and by the Spirit's aſſiſtance we can bear the greateſt, the Spirit will join his ſhoulders to help us to bear our infirmities. The Lord will put his hand to heave us up. "You have heard of the patience of "Job," ſaith James; we have heard likewiſe of his impatience too: but it pleaſed God mercifully to overlook that. It yields us comfort alſo in deſolate conditions, as contagious ſickneſſes and the like, wherein we are more immediately under God's hand. Then Chriſt hath a throne of mercy at our bed-ſide, and numbers our tears and our groans. And to come to the matter we are now about. The Sacrament * was ordained, not for angels, but for men, and not for perfect men, but for weak men, and not for Chriſt, who is truth itſelf, to bind him, but becauſe we are ready, by reaſon of our guilty and unbelieving hearts, to call truth itſelf into queſtion. Therefore it was not enough for his goodneſs to leave us many precious promiſes, but he giveth us ſeals to ſtrengthen us: and what though we are not ſo prepared as we ſhould, yet let us pray as Hezekiah did, "The Lord par-"don every one that prepareth his heart to ſeek the Lord God "of his fathers, if he be not cleanſed according to the purifica-"tion of the ſanctuary," 2 Chron. xxx. 10. Then we come comfortably to this holy Sacrament, and with much fruit. This ſhould carry us through all duties, with much cheerfulneſs, that if we hate our corruptions and ſtrive againſt them, they ſhall not be counted ours. "It is not I," ſaith St Paul, "but ſin that "dwelleth in me;" for what diſpleaſeth us, ſhall never hurt us, and we ſhall be eſteemed of God to be what we love, and deſire and labour to be. What we deſire to be, we ſhall be, and what we deſire truly to conquer, we ſhall conquer; for "God "will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him," Pſal. cxlv. 19. The deſire is an earneſt of the thing. How little encouragement will carry us on in the affairs of this life? and yet all the helps God offers will hardly prevail with our backward natures. Whence then are diſcouragements?

1. Not from the Father, for he hath bound himſelf in covenant to pity us as a Father pitieth his children, and to accept as a

* This Sermon was preached at the Sacrament.

father, our weak endeavours, and what is wanting in the ſtrength of duty, he giveth us leave to make up in his gracious indulgence, whereby we ſhall honour that grace wherein he delighteth, as much as in more perfect performances.

2. Not from Chriſt, for he by his office will not quench the ſmoaking flax.

3. Not from the Spirit, he helps our infirmities, and by office is a Comforter. Diſcouragements then muſt come from ourſelves and Satan, who labours to faſten on us a loathing of duty, and among other cauſes of diſcouragement, ſome are much vexed with ſcruples, (even againſt the beſt duties) partly by diſtemper of body, helped by Satan's malice, caſting duſt in their eyes, in their way to heaven; and partly from ſome remainder of ignorance, which, like darkneſs, breedeth fears; and as ignorant of other things, ſo eſpecially of this merciful diſpoſition of Chriſt. The perſuaſion of which would eaſily baniſh falſe fears; they conceive of him as one ſitting at a catch for all advantages againſt them, wherein they may ſee how they wrong not only themſelves but his goodneſs. This ſcrupulouſneſs for the moſt part is the ſign of a godly ſoul, as ſome weeds are of a good ſoil; therefore are they the more to be pitied, for it is a heavy affliction, and the ground of it in moſt is not ſo much from trouble of conſcience as from ſickneſs of fancy: the end of Chriſt's coming was to free us from all ſuch groundleſs fears.

4. There is ſtill in ſome, ſuch ignorance of that comfortable condition we are in under the covenant of grace, as by it they are much diſcouraged. Therefore we muſt know, that weakneſſes do not break covenant with God; they do not between huſband and wife, and ſhall we make ourſelves more pitiful than Chriſt? who maketh himſelf a pattern of love to all other huſbands.

5. Weakneſſes do not debar us from mercy, nay, they incline God the more, Pſal. lxxviii. 39. Mercy is a part of the church's jointure; Chriſt marries her in mercy. The huſband is bound to bear with the wife, as being the weaker veſſel, and ſhall we think he will exempt himſelf from his own rule, and not bear with his weak ſpouſe?

6. If Chriſt ſhould not be merciful to our infirmities, he ſhould not have a people to ſerve him.

But ſuppoſe, therefore, we are very weak, yet ſo long as we are not found amongſt malicious oppoſers, and underminers of God's truth, let us not give way to deſpairing thoughts, we ha e

a merciful Saviour. But leſt we flatter ourſelves without ground, we muſt know that weakneſſes are accounted either—1. imperfections cleaving to our beſt actions; or 2. ſuch actions as proceed from want of age in Chriſt, whilſt we are babes; or 3. from want of ſtrength, where there hath been little means; or 4. they are ſudden undeliberate breakings out, contrary to our general bent and purpoſe, whilſt our judgement is overcaſt with the cloud of a ſudden temptation. After which, 1. we are ſenſible of our infirmity; 2. we grieve for it; 3. and from grief complain, and with complaining ſtrive, and labour to reform, and in labouring, get ſome ground of our corruption. There be ſome almoſt invincible infirmities, as forgetfulneſs, heavineſs of ſpirit, ſudden paſſions, fears, &c. which, though natural, yet are for the moſt part tainted with ſin; of theſe we are weary, and would fain ſhake them off, as a ſick man his ague; otherwiſe it is not to be eſteemed weakneſs, ſo much as wilfulneſs, and the more will, the more ſin; and little ſins, when God ſhall awaken the conſcience, and ſet them in order before us, will prove great burdens, and not only bruiſe a reed, but ſhake a cedar. Yet God's children never ſin with full will, becauſe there is a contrary law of the mind, whereby the dominion of ſin is broken, which always hath ſome ſecret working againſt the law of ſin. Yet there may be ſo much will in a ſinful action, as may wonderfully waſte our comfort afterwards, and keep us long upon the rack of a diſquieted conſcience, God, in his fatherly diſpenſation, ſuſpending the ſenſe of his love. So much as we give way to our wills in ſinning, at ſuch a meaſure of diſtance we ſet ourſelves from comfort. Sin againſt conſcience is as a thief in the candle, which waſteth our joy, and thereby weakeneth our ſtrength. We muſt know, therefore, that wilful breaches in ſanctification, will much hinder the ſenſe of our juſtification.

Queſtion.—What courſe ſhall ſuch take to recover their peace?

Anſwer.—Such muſt give a ſharp ſentence againſt themſelves, and yet caſt themſelves upon God's mercy in Chriſt, as at their firſt converſion. And now they had need to claſp about Chriſt the faſter, as they ſee more need in themſelves, and let them remember the mildneſs of Chriſt here, that will not quench the ſmoaking flax. Oftimes we ſee, that after a deep humiliation, Chriſt ſpeaks more peace than before, to witneſs the truth of this reconciliation, becauſe he knows Satan's enterpriſes in caſting down ſuch lower; and becauſe ſuch are moſt abaſed in themſelves,

ſelves, and are aſhamed to look Chriſt in the face, by reaſon of their unkindneſs. We ſee God did not only pardon David, but after much bruiſing, gave him wiſe Solomon to ſucceed him in the kingdom. We ſee in the Canticles, that the church, after ſhe had been humbled for her ſlighting of Chriſt, he ſweetly entertains her again, and falleth into commendation of her beauty, Cant. vi. We muſt know for our comfort, that Chriſt was not anointed to this great work of the Mediator for leſſer ſins only, but for the greateſt, if there be but a ſpark of true faith to lay hold on him. Therefore if there be any bruiſed reed, let him not except himſelf, when Chriſt doth not except him—"Come "unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," &c. Why ſhould we not make uſe of ſo gracious a diſpoſition? we are only therefore poor, becauſe we know not our riches in Chriſt. In time of temptation rather believe Chriſt than the devil; believe truth from truth itſelf; hearken not to a lyar, an enemy, and a murderer.

Since Chriſt is thus comfortably ſet out unto us, let us not believe Satan's repreſentations of him. When we are troubled in conſcience for our ſins, his manner is then to preſent him to the afflicted ſoul as a moſt ſevere judge, armed with juſtice againſt us. But then let us preſent him to our ſouls, as thus offered to our view by God himſelf, as holding out a ſceptre of mercy, and ſpreading his arms to receive us. When we think of Joſeph, Daniel, John the Evangeliſt, &c. we frame conceits of them with delight as of mild and ſweet perſons; much more when we think of Chriſt, we ſhould conceive of him as a mirror of all meekneſs. If the ſweetneſs of all flowers were in one, how ſweet muſt that flower needs be? In Chriſt all perfections of mercy and love meet; how great then muſt that mercy be, that lodgeth in ſo gracious a heart? Whatſoever tenderneſs is ſcattered in huſband, father, brother, head, all is but a beam from him, it is in him in the moſt eminent manner. We are weak, but we are his; we are deformed, but yet carry his image upon us. A father looks not ſo much at the blemiſhes of his child, as at his own nature in him; ſo Chriſt finds matter of love from that which is his own in us. He ſees his own nature in us, we are diſeaſed, but yet his members. Who ever neglected his own members becauſe they were ſick or weak? none ever hated his own fleſh. Can the head forget the members? Can Chriſt forget himſelf? we are his fulneſs as he is ours. He was love itſelf clothed with man's nature, which he united ſo near to himſelf, that he might communicate his goodneſs the more freely unto us.

And

He took our nature, not when it was at the beſt, but when it was abaſed with all natural and common infirmities it was ſubject unto. Let us therefore abhor all ſuſpicious thoughts, as either caſt in, or cheriſhed by that damned ſpirit, who, as he laboured to divide between the Father and the Son by jealouſies—"If thou "be the Son of God," &c. Matt. iv. 6. So his daily ſtudy is to divide betwixt the Son and us, by breeding miſperſuaſions in us of Chriſt, as if there were not ſuch tender love in him to ſuch as we are It was his art from the beginning, to diſcredit God with man, by calling God's love into queſtion, with our firſt father Adam; his ſucceſs then makes him ready at that weapon ſtill.

Objection.—But for all this, I feel not Chriſt ſo to me (ſaith the ſmoaking flax) but rather the clean contrary, he ſeemeth to be an enemy unto me; I ſee and feel evidences of his juſt diſpleaſure.

Anſwer.—Chriſt may act the part of an enemy a little while, as Joſeph did, but it is to make way for acting his own part of mercy in a more ſeaſonable time; he cannot hold in his bowels long, he ſeemeth to wreſtle with us, as with Jacob, but he ſupplies us with hidden ſtrength, at length to get the better. Faith pulls off the vizard from his face, and ſees a loving heart under contrary appearances. At firſt he anſwers the woman of Canaan crying after him, not a word; ſecond, then gives her a denial; third, gives an anſwer tending to her reproach, calling her dog, as being without the covenant; yet ſhe would not be ſo beaten off, for ſhe conſidered the end of his coming. As his Father was never nearer him in ſtrength to ſupport him, than when he was fartheſt off in ſenſe of favour to comfort him; ſo Chriſt is never nearer us in power to uphold us, than when he ſeemeth moſt to hide his preſence from us. The influence of the Sun of Righteouſneſs pierceth deeper than his light. In ſuch caſes, whatſoever Chriſt's preſent carriage is towards us, let us oppoſe his nature and office againſt it; he cannot deny himſelf, he cannot but diſcharge the office his Father hath laid upon him. We ſee here, the Father hath undertaken that he ſhall not quench the ſmoaking flax, and Chriſt again undertaketh for us to the Father, appearing before him for us, until he preſent us blameleſs before him. The Father hath given us to Chriſt, and Chriſt giveth us back again to the Father.

Objection.—This were good comfort, if I were but as ſmoaking flax.

Anſwer.

Anſwer.—It is well that thy objection reſteth upon thyſelf, and not upon Chriſt; it is well thou giveſt him the honour of his mercy towards others, though not to thyſelf; but yet do not wrong the work of his Spirit in thy heart. Satan, as he ſlandereth Chriſt to us, ſo he ſlandereth us to ourſelves. If thou be not ſo much as ſmoaking flax, then why doſt thou not renounce thy intereſt in Chriſt, and diſclaim the covenant of grace? this thou dareſt not do; why doſt thou not give up thyſelf wholly to other contents? this thy ſpirit will not ſuffer thee. Whence come theſe reſtleſs groanings and complaints? Lay this thy preſent eſtate, together with this office of Chriſt to ſuch, and do not deſpiſe the conſolation of the Almighty, nor refuſe thy own mercy. Caſt thyſelf into the arms of Chriſt, and if thou periſheſt, periſh there; if thou doſt not, thou art ſure to periſh.

If mercy be to be found any where, it is there; herein appears Chriſt's care to thee, that he hath given thee a heart, in ſome degree ſenſible: he might have given thee up to hardneſs, ſecurity, and profaneneſs of heart, of all ſpiritual judgements the greateſt. He that died for his enemies, will he refuſe thoſe, the deſire of whoſe ſoul is towards him? he that by his meſſengers deſires us to be reconciled, will he put us off when we earneſtly ſeek it at his hand? No, doubtleſs, when he prevents us by kindling holy deſires in us, he is ready to meet us in his own ways. When the prodigal ſet himſelf to return to his father, his father ſtays not for him, but meets him in the way. When he prepares the heart to ſeek, he will cauſe his ear to hear. He cannot find in his heart to hide himſelf long from us. If God ſhould bring us into ſuch a dark condition, as that we ſhould ſee no light from himſelf, or the creature, then let us remember what he ſaith by the prophet, Iſaiah l. 10. "He that is in darkneſs, "and ſeeth no light," no light of comfort, no light of God's countenance, yet "let him truſt in the name of the Lord."—We can never be in ſuch a condition, wherein there will be juſt cauſe of utter deſpair; therefore let us do as mariners do, caſt anchor in the dark. Chriſt knows how to pity us in this caſe: for what comfort he felt from his Father in his breakings, the like we ſhall feel from himſelf in our bruiſing.

The ſighs of a bruiſed heart carry in them ſome report, as of our affection to Chriſt, ſo of his care to us. The eyes of our ſouls cannot be towards him, but that he hath caſt a gracious look upon us firſt; the leaſt love we have to him, is but a reflection of his love firſt ſhining upon us. As Chriſt did in his example whatſoever he gives us in charge to do, ſo he ſuffered in his

his own perſon whatſoever he calleth us to ſuffer, that he might the better learn to relieve and pity us in our ſufferings. In his deſertion in the garden, and upon the croſs, he was content to want that unſpeakable ſolace in the preſence of his father, both to bear the wrath of the Lord for a time for us, and likewiſe to know the better how to comfort us in our greateſt extremities; God ſeeth it fit we ſhould taſte of that cup of which his Son drank ſo deep, that we ſhould feel a little what ſin is, and what his Son's love was; but our comfort is, that Chriſt drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will ſuccour us, that our ſpirits utterly fail not under that little taſte of his diſpleaſure which we may feel. He became not only a man, but a curſe, a man of ſorrows for us. He was broken, that we ſhould not be broken; he was troubled, that we ſhould not be deſperately troubled; he became a curſe, that we ſhould not be accurſed. Whatſoever may be wiſhed for in an all-ſufficient Comforter, is all to be found in Chriſt.—1. Authority from the Father; all power was given him: 2. Strength in himſelf, as having his name, "the mighty "God:" 3. Wiſdom, and that from his own experience how and when to help: 4. Willingneſs, as being fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone.

We are now to take notice of divers ſorts of men that offend deeply againſt this merciful diſpoſition of Chriſt: As,

1. Such as go on in ill courſes of life upon this conceit, as if it were in vain to go to Chriſt, their lives have been ſo ill; when as ſo ſoon as we look to heaven, all encouragements are ready to meet us, and draw us forward. Amongſt others, this is one allurement, that Chriſt is ready to welcome us, and lead us further. None are damned in the church, but thoſe that will. Such as either enforce upon themſelves hard conceits of Chriſt, that they may have ſome ſhew of reaſon to fetch contentment from other things; as that unprofitable ſervant, that would needs take up a conceit, that his maſter was a hard man; hereby to flatter himſelf in his unfruitful courſes, in not improving that talent which he had.

2. Such as take up a hope of their own, that Chriſt will ſuffer them to walk in the way to hell, and yet bring them to heaven: whereas all comfort ſhould draw us nearer to Chriſt, elſe it is a lying comfort, either in itſelf, or in our application of it.

3. Thoſe that will caſt water themſelves upon thoſe ſparks which Chriſt labours to kindle in them, becauſe they will not be troubled with the light of them.

Such

Such muſt know, that the Lamb can be angry, and they that will not come under his ſceptre of mercy, ſhall be cruſhed in pieces by his ſceptre of power. Though he will graciouſly tender, and maintain the leaſt ſpark of true grace, yet where he findeth not a ſpark of grace, but oppoſition to the Spirit ſtriving with them, his wrath once kindled ſhall burn to hell. There is no juſter provocation, than when kindneſs is churliſhly refuſed.

When God would have cured Babylon, and ſhe would not be cured, then ſhe was given up to deſtruction.

When Jeruſalem would not be gathered under the wing of Chriſt, then their habitation was left deſolate.

When wiſdom ſtretcheth out her hand, and men refuſe, then wiſdom will laugh at men's deſtruction. Salvation itſelf will not ſave thoſe that ſpill the potion, and caſt away the plaiſter. A pitiful caſe, when this merciful Saviour ſhall delight in deſtruction: when he that made men, ſhall have no mercy on them.

Oh, ſay the rebels of the time, God hath not made us to damn us: Yes, if you will not meet Chriſt in the ways of his mercy, it is fit you ſhould "eat the fruit of your own ways, and be filled "with your own devices." Prov. i. 3.

This will be the hell of hell, when men ſhall think that they have loved their ſins, more than their ſouls; when they ſhall think what love and mercy hath been almoſt enforced upon them, and yet they would periſh. The more acceſſory we are in pulling a judgement upon ourſelves, the more the conſcience will be confounded in itſelf, when they ſhall acknowledge Chriſt to be without all blame, themſelves without excuſe.

If men appeal to their own conſciences, they will tell them, the Holy Spirit hath often knocked at their hearts, as willing to have kindled ſome holy deſires in them. How elſe can they be ſaid to reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, but that the Spirit was readier to draw them to a further degree of goodneſs, than ſtood with their own wills? whereupon thoſe in the church that are damned, are ſelf-condemned before. So that here we need not to riſe to higher cauſes, when men carry ſufficient cauſe of their own damnation in their own boſoms.

4. And the beſt of us all may offend againſt this merciful diſpoſition, if we be not watchful againſt that liberty our carnal diſpoſitions will be ready to take from it. Thus we reaſon. If Chriſt will not quench the ſmoaking flax, what need we fear that any

any neglect on our part can bring us under a comfortleſs condition? If Chriſt will not do it, who can?

Anſ.—You know the apoſtle's prohibition notwithſtanding, 1 Theſſ. v. *Quench not the ſpirit.* Theſe cautions of not quenching are ſanctified by the Spirit, as means of not quenching.—Chriſt performeth his office in not quenching, by ſtirring up ſuitable endeavours in us, and none more ſolicitous in the uſe of the means, than thoſe that are moſt certain of the good ſucceſs: the ground is this, the means that God hath ſet apart for the effecting of any thing, fall under the ſame purpoſe that he hath to bring that thing to paſs; and this is a principle taken for granted even in civil matters: who, for if he knew before it would be a fruitful year, would therefore hang up his plough and neglect tillage?

Hence the apoſtle ſtirs up, from the certain expectation of a bleſſing, and this encouragement here from the good iſſue of final victory is intended to ſtir us up, and not to take us off; if we be negligent in the exerciſe of grace received, and uſe of means preſcribed, ſuffering our ſpirits to be oppreſſed with multitudes and variety of cares of this life, and take not heed of the damps of the times, for ſuch miſcarriage God in his wiſe care ſuffereth us oft to fall into a worſe condition for feeling, than thoſe that were never ſo much enlightened. Yet in mercy he will not ſuffer us to be ſo far enemies to ourſelves, as wholly to neglect theſe ſparks once kindled. Were it poſſible that we ſhould be given up to give over all endeavour wholly, then we could look for no other iſſue but quenching. But Chriſt will tend this ſpark, and cheriſh this ſmall ſeed, ſo as he will preſerve in the ſoul always ſome degree of care. If we would make a comfortable uſe of this, we muſt conſider all thoſe means whereby Chriſt doth preſerve grace begun.

1. Holy communion, whereby one Chriſtian heateth another: "Two are better than one, &c. Did not our hearts burn," ſaid the diſciples?

2. Much more communion with God in holy duties, as meditation and prayer, which do not only kindle, but add a luſtre to the ſoul.

3. We feel by experience the breath of the ſpirit to go along with the miniſterial breath, whereupon the apoſtle knits theſe two together, "Quench not the ſpirit, deſpiſe not prophecies." Nathan by a few words blew up the decaying ſparks in David.

Rather

Rather than God will ſuffer his fire in us to die, he will ſend ſome Nathan or other, and ſomething is always left in us to join with the word, as connatural to it as a coal that hath fire in it will quickly catch more to it: ſmoaking flax will eaſily take fire.

4. Grace is ſtrengthened by the exerciſe of it. "Up and be "doing, and the Lord be with thee," ſaith David to his ſon Solomon. "Stir up the grace that is in thee," for ſo holy motions turn to reſolutions, reſolutions to practice, and practice to a prepared readineſs to every good work.

Caution.—Yet let us know that grace is increaſed in the exerciſe of it, not by virtue of the exerciſe itſelf, but as Chriſt by his ſpirit floweth into the ſoul, and bringeth us nearer unto himſelf the fountain, and inſtilleth ſuch comfort in the act, whereby the heart is further enlarged. The heart of a Chriſtian is Chriſt's garden, and his graces are as ſo many ſweet ſpices and flowers, which his ſpirit blowing upon maketh them to ſend forth a ſweet ſavour: therefore keep the ſoul open for entertainment of the Holy Ghoſt, for he will bring in continually freſh forces to ſubdue corruption, and this moſt of all on the Lord's day.—John was in the ſpirit on the Lord's day, even in Pathmos, the place of his baniſhment, then the gales of the Spirit blew more ſtrongly and ſweetly. As we look therefore for the comfort of this doctrine, let us not favour our natural ſloth, but exerciſe ourſelves to godlineſs, and labour to keep this fire always burning upon the altar of our hearts, and dreſs our lamps daily, and put in freſh oil, and wind up our ſouls higher and higher ſtill: reſting in a good condition, is contrary to grace, which cannot but promote itſelf to a further meaſure: let none turn this grace into wantonneſs. Infirmities are a ground of humility, not a plea for negligence, nor an encouragement to preſumption. We ſhould be ſo far from being ill, becauſe Chriſt is good, as that thoſe coals of love ſhould melt us; therefore thoſe may well ſuſpect themſelves, in whom the conſideration of this mildneſs of Chriſt doth not work that way. Surely where grace is, corruption is as ſmoak to their eyes, and vinegar to their teeth.—And therefore they will labour in regard to their own comfort, as likewiſe for the credit of religion, and the glory of God, that their light may break forth. If a ſpark of faith or love be ſo precious, what an honour will it be to be rich in faith!—Who would not rather walk in the light, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, than to live in a dark perplexed eſtate? and not

not rather be carried with full ſail to heaven, than be toſſed always with fears and doubts? The preſent trouble in conflict againſt a ſin is not ſo much as that diſquiet which any corruption favoured, will bring upon us afterwards: true peace is in conquering, not in yielding. The comfort in this text is intended for thoſe who would fain do better, but find their corruptions clog them, that are in ſuch a miſt, that oft-times they cannot tell what to think of themſelves; that fain would believe, and yet oft fear they do not believe, and think that it cannot be that God ſhould be ſo good to ſuch ſinful wretches as they are, and yet they allow not themſelves in theſe fears and doubts.

5. And among others, how do they wrong themſelves and him, that will have other mediators to God for them than he? are any more pitiful than he, who became man to that end, that he might be pitiful to his own fleſh? let us at all times repair to this meek Saviour, and put up all our ſuits in his prevailing name. What need we knock at any other door? can any be more tender over us than Chriſt? What encouragement have we to commend the ſtate of the church in general, or of any broken hearted Chriſtian, unto him, by our prayers? Of whom we may ſpeak unto Chriſt as they of Lazarus, Lord, the church which thou loveſt and gaveſt thyſelf for, is in diſtreſs: Lord, this poor Chriſtian for whom thou wert bruiſed, is bruiſed and brought very low. It cannot but touch his bowels, when the miſery of his own dear bowels is ſpread before him.

6. Conſidering this gracious nature in Chriſt, let us think with ourſelves thus—when he is ſo kind unto us, ſhall we be cruel againſt him, in his name, in his truth, in his children? how ſhall thoſe that delight to be ſo terrible to the meek of the earth, hope to look ſo gracious a Saviour in the face? they that are ſo boiſterous towards his Spouſe, ſhall know one day, they had to deal with himſelf in his church. So it cannot but cut the heart of thoſe who have felt this love of Chriſt, to hear him wounded who is the life of their lives, and the ſoul of their ſouls: this maketh thoſe that have felt mercy weep over Chriſt, whom they have pierced with their ſins; there cannot but be a mutual and quick ſympathy between the head and the members. When we are tempted to any ſin, if we will not pity ourſelves, yet we ſhould ſpare Chriſt, in not putting him to new torments. The apoſtle could not find out a more heart-breaking argument to enforce a ſacrificing ourſelves to God, than to conjure us by the mercies of God in Chriſt.

7. This mercy of Chriſt likewiſe ſhould move us to commiſerate the eſtate of the poor church, torn by enemies without, and renting itſelf by diviſions at home. It cannot but work upon any ſoul that ever felt comfort from Chriſt, to conſider what an affectionate intreaty the apoſtle uſeth to mutual agreement in judgement and affection. "If any conſolation in Chriſt, "if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the ſpirit, any bow-"els and mercies, fulfill my joy, be like minded," Phil. ii. 1. As if he ſhould ſay, Unleſs you will diſclaim all conſolation in Chriſt, &c. labour to maintain the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace: what a joyful ſpectacle is this to ſatan and his faction, to ſee thoſe that are ſeparated from the world, fall in pieces among themſelves? Our diſcord is our enemies melody.

The more to blame are thoſe that for private aims affect differences from others, and will not ſuffer the wounds of the church to cloſe and meet together. Which muſt not be underſtood as if men ſhould diſſemble their judgement in any truth, where there is juſt cauſe of expreſſing themſelves, for the leaſt truth is Chriſt's and not ours, and therefore we are not to take liberty to affirm or deny at our pleaſure: there is a due in a penny, as well as in a pound, therefore we muſt be faithful in the leaſt truth, when ſeaſon calleth for it; then our words are like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. One word ſpoken in ſeaſon will do more good than a thouſand out of ſeaſon. In ſome caſes, peace by keeping our faith to ourſelves, is of more conſequence than the open diſcovery of ſome things we take to be true, conſidering the weakneſs of man's nature is ſuch that there can hardly be a diſcovery of any difference in opinion, without ſome eſtrangement of affection. So far as men are not of one mind, they will hardly be of one heart, except where grace and the peace of God bear great rule in the heart, therefore open ſhew of difference is never good but when it is neceſſary; howſoever, ſome, from a deſire to be ſomebody, turn into by-ways, and yield to a ſpirit of contradiction in themſelves; yet if St. Paul may be judge, *are they not carnal?* if it be wiſdom, it is wiſdom from beneath, for the wiſdom from above, as it is pure, ſo is it peaceable. Our bleſſed Saviour, when he was to leave the world, what doth he preſs upon his diſciples more than peace and love? And in his laſt prayer, with what earneſtneſs did he beg of his Father that they might be one, as he and the Father were one? But what he prayed for on earth, we ſhall only enjoy perfectly in heaven. Let this make the meditation of that time the more ſweet unto us.

8. And

8. And further to lay open offenders in this kind, what ſpirit ſhall we think them to be of, that take advantage of the bruiſedneſs and infirmities of mens ſpirits, to relieve them with falſe peace, for their own worldly ends? A wounded ſpirit will part with any thing. Moſt of the gainful points of popery, as confeſſion, ſatisfaction, merit, purgatory, &c. ſpring from hence, but they are phyſicians of no value, or rather tormentors than phyſicians at all. It is a greater bleſſing to be delivered from the ſting of theſe ſcorpions, than we are thankful for. Spiritual tyranny is the greateſt tyranny, and then eſpecially, when it is where moſt mercy ſhould be ſhewed, yet even there, ſome like cruel ſurgeons, delight in making long cures, to ſerve themſelves upon the miſery of others. It bringeth men under a terrible curſe: "When they will not remember to ſhew mercy, "but perſecute the poor and needy man, that they might even "ſlay the broken in heart," Pſ. cix. 16.

Likewiſe, to ſuch as raiſe temporal advantage to themſelves out of the ſpiritual miſery of others, join ſuch as raiſe eſtates by betraying the church, and are unfaithful in the truſt committed unto them: when the children ſhall cry for the bread of life, and there is none to give them, bringing thus upon the people of God that heavy judgement of a ſpiritual famine, ſtarving Chriſt in his members. Shall we ſo requite ſo good a Saviour, who counteth the love and mercy ſhewed in feeding his lambs, as ſhewed to himſelf?

Laſtly.—They carry themſelves very unkindly towards Chriſt, who ſtumble at this his low ſtooping unto us in his government and ordinances, that are aſhamed of the ſimplicity of the goſpel, that count preaching fooliſhneſs. They out of the pride of their heart think they may do well enough without the help of the word and ſacraments; and think Chriſt took not ſtate enough upon him, and therefore they will mend the matter with their own devices, whereby they may give the better content to fleſh and blood, as in popery. What greater unthankfulneſs can there be, than to deſpiſe any help that Chriſt in mercy hath provided for us? In the days of his fleſh, the proud Phariſees took offence at his familiar converſing with ſinful men, who only did ſo, as a phyſician to heal their ſouls. What defences was St Paul driven to make for himſelf, for his plainneſs in unfolding the goſpel? The more Chriſt, in himſelf, and in his ſervants, ſhall deſcend to exalt us, the more we ſhould with all humility and readineſs entertain that love, and magnify the goodneſs of

God, that hath put the great work of our ſalvation, and laid the government upon ſo gentle a Saviour, that will carry himſelf ſo mildly in all things wherein he is to deal betwixt God and us, and us and God; the lower Chriſt comes down to us, the higher let us lift him up in our hearts; ſo will all thoſe do, that have ever found the experience of Chriſt's work in their heart.

We come to the third part, the conſtant progreſs of Chriſt's gracious power, until he hath ſet up ſuch an abſolute government in us, as ſhall prevail over all corruption.—It is ſaid here, he will cheriſh his beginnings of grace in us, until he bring forth judgement unto victory. By judgement here is meant, the kingdom of grace in us; that government, whereby Chriſt ſets up a throne in our hearts. Governors among the Jews were firſt called Judges, then Kings, whence this inward rule is called judgement; as likewiſe, becauſe it agrees unto the judgement of the word, which the Pſalmiſt oft calleth judgement, becauſe it agreeth to God's judgement: men may read their doom in God's word; what it judgeth of them, God judgeth of them. By this judgement ſet up in us, good is diſcerned, allowed, and performed; ſin is judged, condemned, and executed. Our ſpirit being under the Spirit of Chriſt, is governed by him, and ſo far as it is governed by Chriſt it governs us graciouſly. Chriſt and we are of one judgement, and of one will; he hath his will in us, and his judgements are ſo inveſted into us, as that they are turned into our judgement, we carrying his law in our hearts, written by his Spirit; and the law in the inner man, and the law written, anſwer as counterparts to each other.

The meaning then is, that the gracious frame of holineſs ſet up in our hearts by the Spirit of Chriſt ſhall go forward, until all contrary power be brought under. The ſpirit of judgement will be a ſpirit of burning, to conſume whatſoever oppoſed corruption like ruſt eats into the ſoul. If God's builders fall into errors and build ſtubble upon a good foundation, God's Spirit as a ſpiritual fire will reveal this in time, and waſte it; they ſhall by a ſpirit of judgement condemn their own errors and courſes.

The whole work of grace in us is ſet out under the name of judgement, and ſometimes wiſdom, becauſe judgement is the chief and leading part in grace; whereupon that gracious work of repentance is called a change of the mind, and an after-wiſdom. As on the other ſide in the learned languages, the words that expreſs wiſdom, imply likewiſe the general reliſh and ſavour of the whole ſoul; and rather more the judgement of taſte than of ſight, or any other ſenſe, becauſe taſte is the moſt neceſſary

ſenſe

ſenſe, and requireth the neareſt application of the object of all other ſenſes. So in ſpiritual life, it is moſt neceſſary that the ſpirit ſhould alter the taſte of the ſoul, ſo as that it might ſavour the things of the ſpirit ſo deeply, that all other things ſhould be out of reliſh.

And as it is true of every particular Chriſtian, that Chriſt's judgement in him ſhall be victorious, ſo likewiſe of the whole body of Chriſtians, the church. The government of Chriſt and his truth, whereby he ruleth as by a ſcepter, ſhall at length be victorious, in ſpite of Satan, Antichriſt, and all enemies. Chriſt riding on his white horſe, hath a bow, and goeth forth conquering in the miniſtry, that he may overcome either to converſion or to confuſion. But yet I take judgement, for Chriſt's kingdom and government within us, principally—1. Becauſe God ſpecially requireth the ſubjection of the ſoul and conſcience, as his proper throne. 2. Becauſe if judgement ſhould prevail in all others about us, and not in our own hearts, it would not yield comfort to us; hereupon it is the firſt thing that we deſire when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," that Chriſt would come and rule in our hearts. The kingdom of Chriſt in his ordinances ſerves but to bring Chriſt home into his own place, our hearts.

The words being thus explained, that judgement here includeth the government of both mind, will, and affections, there are divers concluſions that naturally do ſpring.

1. That Chriſt's government in his church and in his children, is a wiſe and well-ordered government, becauſe it is called judgement, and judgement is the life and ſoul of wiſdom. Of this concluſion there are two branches—1. That the ſpiritual government of Chriſt in us is joined with judgement and wiſdom.—2. Whereſoever true ſpiritual wiſdom and judgment is, there likewiſe the Spirit of Chriſt bringeth in his gracious government.

For the firſt, a well guided life, by the rules of Chriſt, ſtandeth with the ſtrongeſt and higheſt reaſon of all; and therefore holy men are called the children of wiſdom, and are able to juſtify, both by reaſon and experience, all the ways of wiſdom. Oppoſite courſes are folly and madneſs. Hereupon St Paul ſaith, that a ſpiritual man judgeth all things that appertain to him, and is judged of none that are of an inferior rank, becauſe they want ſpiritual light and ſight to judge; yet this ſort of men will be judging and ſpeaking ill of what they know not, they ſtep from ignorance to prejudice and raſh cenſure, without taking right

judgement in their way, and therefore their judgement comes to nothing. But the judgement of a ſpiritual man, ſo far forth as he is ſpiritual, ſhall ſtand, becauſe it is agreeable to the nature of things; as things are in themſelves, ſo they are in his judgement. As God is in himſelf infinite in goodneſs and majeſty, &c. ſo he is to him, he aſcribes to God in his heart his divinity, and all his excellencies. As Chriſt is in himſelf the only Mediator, and All in All in the church, ſo he is to him, by making Chriſt ſo in his heart. As all things are dung in compariſon of Chriſt, ſo they are to Paul a ſanctified man. As the very worſt thing in religion, "the reproach of Chriſt is better than the pleaſure of "ſin for a ſeaſon," ſo it is to Moſes, a man of a right eſteem. "As one day in the courts of God is better than a thouſand "elſewhere," ſo it is to David, a man of a reformed judgement. There is a conformity of a good man's judgement to things as they are in themſelves, and according to the difference, or agreement put by God in things, ſo doth his judgement differ or agree.

Truth is truth, and error error, and that which is unlawful is unlawful, whether men think ſo or no. God hath put an eternal difference betwixt light and darkneſs, good and ill, which no creatures conceit can alter, and therefore no man's judgement is the meaſure of things, further than it agrees to truth ſtamped upon things themſelves by God. Hereupon, becauſe a wiſe man's judgement agrees to the truth of things, a wiſe man may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be the meaſure of things, and the judgement of one holy wiſe man, to be preferred before a thouſand others. Such men uſually are immoveable as the ſun in its courſe, becauſe they think, and ſpeak, and live by rule. A Joſhua and his houſe will ſerve God, whatſoever others do, and will run a courſe contrary to the world, becauſe their judgement leads them in a contrary way. Hence it is that Satan hath a ſpite at the eye of the ſoul, the judgement, to put out that by ignorance and falſe reaſon, for he cannot rule in any, until either he hath taken away or perverted judgement: he is a prince of darkneſs, ruling in the darkneſs of the underſtanding. Therefore he muſt firſt be caſt out of the underſtanding by the prevailing of truth, and planting it in the ſoul. Thoſe, therefore, that are enemies of knowledge, help Satan and Antichriſt (whoſe kingdom, like Satan's, is a kingdom of darkneſs) to erect their throne. Hence it is promiſed by Chriſt, that the "Holy Ghoſt ſhall convince "the world of judgement," that is, that he is reſolved to ſet up a throne of government, becauſe the great lord of miſrule, "Satan, the Prince of the world, is judged" by the goſpel, and the

the Spirit accompanying it, his impoſtures are diſcovered, his enterpriſes laid open, therefore when the goſpel was ſpread, the oracles ceaſed. 'Satan fell from heaven like lightning,' when men were 'tranſlated out of his kingdom into Chriſt's.' Where prevailing is by lyes, there diſcovery is victory: "they ſhall proceed no further, for their folly ſhall be manifeſt to all." 2 Tim. iii. 9. So that manifeſtation of error giveth a ſtop to it, for none will willingly be deceived. Let truth have full ſcope without check or reſtraint, and let Satan and his inſtruments do their worſt, they ſhall not prevail; as Jerome ſaith of the Pelagians in his time, the diſcovery of your opinions is the vanquiſhing of them; your blaſphemies appear at the firſt bluſh.

Use.—Hence we learn the neceſſity, that the underſtanding beprincipled with ſupernatural knowledge, for the well managing of a Chriſtian converſation.

There muſt be light to diſcover a further end than nature, for which we are Chriſtians, and a rule ſuitable, directing to that end, which is the will of God in Chriſt, diſcovering his good pleaſure towards us, and our duty towards him, and in virtue of this diſcovery, we do all that we do that any way may further our reckoning: the eye muſt firſt be ſingle, and then the whole body and frame of our converſation will be light; otherwiſe both we and our courſe of life are nothing but darkneſs; the whole converſation of a Chriſtian is nothing elſe but knowledge, digeſted into will, affection, and practice. If the firſt concoction in the ſtomach be not good, that in the liver cannot be good; ſo if there be error in the judgement, it mars the whole practice, as an error in the foundation doth the building: God will have no blind ſacrifices, no unreaſonable ſervices, but will have us to love him with all our mind, that is, with our underſtanding part, as well as with all our hearts, that is, the affecting part of the ſoul.

This order of Chriſt's government by judgement, is agreeable unto the ſoul, and God delighteth to preſerve the manner of working peculiar unto man, that is, to do what he doth, out of judgement: as grace ſuppoſeth nature as founded upon it, ſo the frame of grace preſerveth the frame of nature in man. And therefore Chriſt bringeth all that is good in the ſoul through judgement, and that ſo ſweetly, that many out of a dangerous error think, that that good which is in them, and iſſueth from them, is from themſelves, and not from the powerful work of grace. As in evil the devil ſo ſubtlely leadeth us according to the ſtream of our own nature, that men think that Satan had no

hand in their ſin; but here a miſtake is with little peril, becauſe we are ill of ourſelves, and the devil doth but promote what ill he findeth in us. But there are no ſeeds of ſupernatural goodneſs at all in us. God findeth nothing in us but enmity, only he hath engraven this in our nature, to incline in general to that which we judge to be good. Now when we ſhall clearly diſcover what is good in particular, we are carried to it, and when convincingly we ſhall diſcover that which is ill, we abhor it as freely as we embraced it before.

From whence we may know when we work as we ſhould do, or not, that is, when we do what we do, out of inward principles, when we fall not upon that which is good only becauſe we are ſo bred, or becauſe ſuch or ſuch whom we reſpect, do ſo, or becauſe we will maintain a ſide, ſo making religion a faction; but out of judgement, when what we do that is good, we firſt judge it in ourſelves ſo to be; and what we abſtain from that is ill, we firſt judge it to be ill from an inward judgement; a ſound Chriſtian, as he enjoyeth the better part, ſo hath firſt made choice of it with Mary; he eſtabliſheth all his thoughts by counſel. God indeed uſeth carnal men to very good ſervice, but without a thorough altering and conviction of their judgements, he worketh by them, but not in them; therefore they do neither approve the good they do, nor hate the evil they abſtain from.

The ſecond branch is, that whereſoever true wiſdom and judgement is, there Chriſt ſets up his government, becauſe where wiſdom is, it directs us not only to underſtand, but to order our ways aright; where Chriſt by his Spirit as a prophet teacheth, he likewiſe as a King by his Spirit ſubdueth the heart to obedience of what is taught. This is that teaching which is promiſed of God, when not only the brain, but the heart itſelf is taught. When men do not only know what they ſhould do, but are taught the very doing of it, they are not only taught that they ſhould love, fear, and obey, but they are taught love itſelf, and fear and obedience itſelf. Chriſt ſets up his throne in the very heart, and alters the frame of that, and makes his ſubjects good, together with teaching of them to be good. Other princes can make good laws, but they cannot write them in their peoples hearts: this is Chriſt's prerogative; he infuſeth into his ſubjects his own Spirit; "upon him there doth not only reſt the ſpirit of "wiſdom and underſtanding," but likewiſe "the ſpirit of the "fear of the Lord." The knowledge which we have of him from himſelf is a transforming knowledge. The ſame ſpirit that enlight-

enlighteneth the mind, inſpireth gracious inclinations into the will and affections, and infuſeth ſtrength into the whole man. As a gracious man judgeth as he ſhould, ſo he affecteth and doth as he judgeth; his life is a commentary of his inward man; there is a ſweet harmony betwixt God's truth, his judgement, and his whole converſation. The heart of a Chriſtian is like Jeruſalem when it was at the beſt, a city compact within itſelf; where are ſet up the thrones of judgement. Judgement ſhould have a throne in the heart of every Chriſtian. Not that judgement alone will work a change, there muſt be grace to alter the bent and ſway of the will, before it will yield to be wrought upon by the underſtanding; God hath ſo joined theſe together, as that whereſoever he doth ſavingly ſhine upon the underſtanding, he giveth a ſoft and pliable heart; for without a work upon the heart by the Spirit of God, it will follow its own inclination to that which it affecteth, whatſoever the judgement ſhall ſay to the contrary; there is no connatural proportion between an unſanctified heart and a ſanctified judgement. For the heart unaltered will not give leave to the judgement, coolly and ſoberly to conclude what is beſt, as the ſick man whilſt his aguiſh diſtemper corrupteth his taſte, he is rather deſirous to pleaſe that, than to hearken to what the phyſician ſhall ſpeak. Judgement hath no power over itſelf, where the will is unſubdued, for the will and affections bribe it to give ſentence for them, when any profit or pleaſure ſhall come in competition with that which the judgement in general only ſhall think to be good, and therefore it is for the moſt part in the power of the heart, what the underſtanding ſhall judge and determine in particular things. Where grace hath brought the heart under, there unruly paſſions do not caſt ſuch a miſt before the underſtanding, but that in particular it ſeeth that which is beſt; and baſe reſpects ſpringing from ſelf-love do not alter the caſe and bias the judgement into a contrary way, but that which is good in itſelf, ſhall be good unto us, although it croſs our particular worldly intereſts.

Use.—The right conceiving of this hath an influence upon practice, which hath drawn me to a more full explanation: this will teach us the right method of godlineſs, to begin with judgement, and then to beg of God, together with illumination, holy inclinations of our will and affections, that ſo a perfect government may be ſet up in our hearts, and that our knowledge may be with all judgement, that is, with experience and feeling: when the judgement of Chriſt is ſet up in our judgements, and thence by the Spirit of Chriſt brought into our hearts, then it is in its proper

proper place and throne, and until then, truth doth us no good, but helpeth to condemn us. The life of a Chriſtian is a regular life, and he that walketh by the rule of the new creature, peace ſhall be upon him; but he that deſpiſeth his way, and loveth to live at large, ſeeking all liberty to the fleſh, ſhall die. And it is made good by St Paul, "If we live after the fleſh, we ſhall die," Rom. viii. 13.

We learn likewiſe, that men of an ill governed life have no true judgement: no wicked man can be a wiſe man; and that without Chriſt's Spirit the ſoul is in confuſion, without beauty and form, as all things were in the chaos before the creation. The whole ſoul is out of joint till it be ſet in again by him whoſe office is to reſtore all things. The baſer part of the ſoul, which ſhould be ſubject, ruleth all, and keepeth under that little truth that is in the underſtanding, holding it captive to baſe affections, and Satan by corruption getteth all the holds of the ſoul, till Chriſt, who is ſtronger than he, cometh, and driveth him out, and taketh poſſeſſion of all the powers and parts of ſoul and body, to be weapons of righteouſneſs, to ſerve him, and then new lords, new laws; Chriſt as a new conqueror changeth the fundamental laws of old Adam, and eſtabliſheth a government of his own.

The ſecond concluſion is, that this government is victorious. The reaſons are:

1. Becauſe Chriſt hath conquered all in his own perſon firſt, and he "is God over all, bleſſed for evermore;" Rom. ix. 5. and therefore over ſin, death, hell, Satan, the world, &c. And as he hath overcome them in himſelf, ſo he overcomes them in our hearts and conſciences. We uſe to ſay, conſcience maketh a man a king or a criminal, becauſe it is planted in us to judge for God, either with us, or againſt us. Now if natural conſcience be ſo forcible, what will it be, when beſides its own light, it hath the light of divine truth put into it? It will undoubtedly prevail, either to make us hold up our head with boldneſs, or abaſe us beneath ourſelves. If it ſubject itſelf by grace to Chriſt's truth, then it boldly overlooks death, hell, judgement, and all ſpiritual enemies, becauſe then Chriſt ſets up his kingdom in the conſcience, and makes it a kind of paradiſe.

The ſharpeſt conflict which the ſoul hath, is between the conſcience and God's juſtice: now, if the conſcience ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt hath prevailed over aſſaults reſulting from the juſtice of God as now ſatisfied by Chriſt, it will prevail over all other oppoſition whatſoever.

2. We

2. We are to encounter with accurſed and damned enemies; therefore if they begin to fall before the ſpirit in us, they ſhall fall; if they riſe up again, it is to have the greater fall.

3. The Spirit of truth, to whoſe tuition Chriſt hath committed his church; and the truth of the Spirit, which is the ſceptre of Chriſt, abide for ever; therefore the ſoul begotten by the immortal ſeed of this Spirit, and this truth, muſt not only live for ever, but likewiſe prevail over all that oppoſe it, for both the word and Spirit are mighty in operation; and if the evil ſpirit be never idle in thoſe whom God delivereth up to him, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit will be idle in thoſe whoſe leading and government is committed to him. No, as he dwelleth in them, ſo he will drive out all that riſe up againſt him, until he be all in all.

What is ſpiritual is eternal; truth is a beam of Chriſt's Spirit both in itſelf, and as it is ingrafted into the ſoul, therefore it, and the grace, though little, wrought by it, will prevail; a little thing in the hand of a giant will do great matters. A little faith ſtrengthened by Chriſt will work wonders.

4. "To him that hath ſhall be given," Matt. xxv. 29. the victory over any corruption or temptation, is a pledge of final victory. As Joſhua ſaid, when he ſet his foot upon the five kings which he conquered; Thus God ſhall do with all our enemies, heaven is ours already, only we ſtrive till we have full poſſeſſion.

5. Chriſt as King, brings in a commanding light into the ſoul, and bows the neck, and ſoftens the iron ſinew of the inner man; and where he begins to rule, he rules for ever, his kingdom hath no end.

6. The end of Chriſt's coming, was to deſtroy the works of the devil, both for us and in us. And the end of his reſurrection, was to ſeal unto us the aſſurance of his victory. 1. To quicken our ſouls from death in ſin: 2. To free our ſouls from ſuch ſnares and ſorrows of ſpiritual death as accompany the guilt of ſin: 3. To raiſe them up more comfortable, as the ſun breaks forth more glorioufly out of a thick cloud: 4. To raiſe us out of particular ſlips and failings, ſtronger; 5. To raiſe us out of all troubleſome and dark conditions of this life: and 6. At length to raiſe our bodies out of the duſt. For the ſame power that the Spirit ſhewed in raiſing Chriſt our head, from the ſorrows of death, and the loweſt degree of his abaſement; the ſame power obtained by the death of Chriſt from God now appeaſed by that ſacrifice,

ſacrifice, will the Spirit ſhew in the church, which is his body, and in every particular member thereof.

And this power is conveyed by faith, whereby after union with Chriſt in both his eſtates of humiliation and exaltation, we ſee ourſelves not only dead with Chriſt, but riſen and ſitting together with him in heavenly places. Now we, apprehending ourſelves to be dead, and riſen, and thereupon victorious over all our enemies, in our head, and apprehending that his ſcope in all this is to conform us to himſelf, we are by this faith changed into his likeneſs, and ſo become conquerors over all our ſpiritual enemies as he is, by that power which we derive from him who is the ſtorehouſe of all ſpiritual ſtrength for all his. Chriſt at length will have his end in us, and faith reſteth aſſured of it, and this aſſurance is very operative, ſtirring us up to join with Chriſt in his ends.

And ſo for the church in general, by Chriſt it will have its victory: Chriſt is that "little ſtone cut out of the mountain "without hands, that breaketh in pieces that goodly image," that is, all oppoſite government, until it become a "great moun-"tain, and filleth the whole earth. So that the ſtone that was cut out of the mountain, becomes a mountain itſelf at length; who art thou then, O mountain, that thinkeſt to ſtand up againſt this mountain? all ſhall lie flat and level before it. He will bring down all mountainous high-exalted thoughts, and lay the pride of all fleſh low. When chaff ſtrives againſt the wind, ſtubble againſt the fire, when the heel kicks againſt the pricks, when the potſherd ſtrives with the potter, when man ſtrives againſt God, it is eaſy to know on which ſide the victory will go. The winds may toſs the ſhip wherein Chriſt is, but not overturn it. The waves may daſh againſt the rock, but they do but break themſelves againſt it.

Objection.—If this be ſo, why is it thus with the church of God, and with many a gracious Chriſtian? the victory ſeemeth to go with the enemy.

Anſwer.—Remember, 1. God's children uſually in their troubles overcome by ſuffering; here lambs overcome lions, and doves eagles, by ſuffering, that herein they may be conformable to Chriſt, who conquered moſt, when he ſuffered moſt; together with Chriſt's kingdom of patience, there was a kingdom of power.

2. This victory is by degrees, and therefore they are too haſty ſpirited,

ſpirited, that would conquer as ſoon as they ſtrike the firſt ſtroke, and be at the end of their race at the firſt ſetting forth: the Iſraelites were ſure of victory in their voyage to Canaan, yet they muſt fight it out. God would not have us preſently forget what cruel enemies Chriſt hath overcome for us, "deſtroy "them not, leſt the people forget it," ſaith the Pſalmiſt. That ſo, by experience of that annoyance we have by them, we might be kept in fear of coming under the power of them.

3. That God often worketh by contraries; when he means to give victory, he will ſuffer us to be foiled firſt; when he means to comfort, he will terrify firſt; when he means to juſtify, he will condemn us firſt; whom he means to make glorious, he will abaſe firſt. A Chriſtian conquers even when he is conquered; when he is conquered by ſome ſins, he gets victory over others more dangerous, as ſpiritual pride, ſecurity, &c.

4. That Chriſt's work both in the church and in the hearts of Chriſtians, often goeth backward, that it may go the better forward: as ſeed rots in the ground in the winter time, but after comes better up, and the harder the winter, the more flouriſhing the ſpring; ſo we learn to ſtand by falls, and get ſtrength by weakneſs diſcovered; we take deeper root by ſhaking; and as torches, flame brighter by moving. Thus it pleaſeth Chriſt out of his freedom, in this manner to maintain his government in us. Let us herein labour to exerciſe our faith, that it may anſwer Chriſt's manner of carriage towards us; when we are foiled, let us believe we ſhall overcome; when we are fallen, let us believe we ſhall riſe again. Jacob, after he had a blow, upon which he halted, yet would not give over wreſtling till he had gotten the bleſſing, ſo let us never give over, but in our thoughts knit the beginning, progreſs and end together, and then we ſhall ſee ourſelves in heaven, out of the reach of all enemies. Let us aſſure ourſelves that God's grace, even in this imperfect eſtate, is ſtronger than man's free will in the ſtate of firſt perfection, and it is founded now in Chriſt, who, as he is the author, ſo will be the finiſher of our faith; we are under a more gracious covenant.

Hereupon it followeth, that weakneſs may ſtand with the aſſurance of ſalvation; the diſciples, notwithſtanding all their weakneſſes, are bidden to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. Failings with conflict in ſanctification ſhould not weaken the peace of our juſtification and aſſurance of ſalvation. It matters not ſo much what evil is in us, as what good; not what

corruptions

corruptions, but how we ſtand affected to them; not what our particular failings are, ſo much as what is the common tenor of our lives: for Chriſt's diſlike of that which is amiſs in us, redounds not to the hatred of our perſon, but to the victorious ſubduing of all our infirmities.

Some have after conflict wondered at the goodneſs of God, that ſo little and ſhaken faith ſhould have upheld them in ſo great combats, when Satan had almoſt catched them. And indeed it is to be wondered, how much a little grace will prevail with God for acceptance, and over our enemies for victory, if the heart be upright. Such is the goodneſs of our ſweet Saviour, that he delighteth ſtill to ſhew his ſtrength in our weakneſs.

Uſe.—1. Therefore for the great conſolation of poor and weak Chriſtians, let them know, that a ſpark from heaven, though kindled under green wood that fobs and ſmoaks, yet it will conſume all at laſt; love once kindled "is ſtrong as death, much "water cannot quench it," Cant. viii. 6. and therefore it is called a vehement flame, or flame of God, kindled in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt. That little that is in us, is fed with an everlaſting ſpring. As the fire that came down from heaven in Elias' time, drank up all the water, to ſhew that it came from God, ſo will this fire ſpend all our corruptions, no affliction without, nor corruption within ſhall quench it. In the morning we often ſee clouds gather about the ſun, as if they would hide it, but the ſun waſteth it by little and little, till it comes to its full ſtrength. At the firſt, fears and doubts hinder the breaking out of this fire, until at length it gets above them all, and Chriſt prevails; and then he backs his own graces in us. Grace conquers us firſt, and we by it conquer all things elſe, whether it be corruptions within us, or temptations without us.

The church of Chriſt, begotten by the word of truth, hath the doctrine of the apoſtles for her crown, and tramples the moon, that is, the world, and all worldly things under her feet: "Every "one that is born of God overcomes the world." Faith, whereby eſpecially Chriſt rules, ſets the ſoul ſo high, that it overlooks all other things as far below, as having repreſented to it, by the Spirit of Chriſt, riches, honour, beauty, pleaſures of a higher nature.

Now, that we may not come ſhort of the comfort intended; there are two things eſpecially to be taken notice of by us:—1. Whether there are ſuch a judgement, or government ſet up in us, to

which this promiſe of victory is made. 2. Some rules or directions how we are to carry ourſelves, that the judgement of Chriſt in us may indeed be victorious.

The evidences whereby we may come to know, that Chriſt's judgement in us, is ſuch as will be victorious, are :—1. If we are able from experience to juſtify all Chriſt's ways, let fleſh and blood ſay what it can to the contrary; and can willingly ſubſcribe to that courſe which God hath taken in Chriſt, to bring us to heaven, and ſtill approve a further meaſure of grace than we have attained unto, and project and forecaſt for it. No other men can juſtify their courſes, when their conſcience is awakened. 2. When reaſons of religion are the ſtrongeſt reaſons with us, and prevail more than reaſons brought from worldly policy. 3. When we are ſo true to our ends and faſt to our rule, as no hopes or fears can ſway us another way, but ſtill we are looking what agrees or differs from our rule. 4. When we can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth, as being dearer to us than our lives; truth hath not this ſovereignty in the heart of any carnal man. 5. When, if we had liberty to chooſe under whoſe government we would live, yet out of a delight in the inner man to Chriſt's government, we would make choice of him only, to rule us before any other, for this argues that we are like-minded to Chriſt; a free and a voluntary people, and not compelled into Chriſt's ſervice, otherwiſe than by the ſweet conſtraint of love. When we are ſo far in liking with the government of Chriſt's ſpirit, that we are willing to reſign up ourſelves to him in all things, for then his kingdom is come into us, when our wills are brought to his will; it is the bent of our wills that maketh us good or evil. 6. A well ordered uniform life, not by fits or ſtarts, ſhews a well ordered heart, as in a clock, when the hammer ſtrikes well, and the hand of the dial points well, it is a ſign that the wheels are ſet right. 7. When Chriſt's will cometh in competition with any earthly loſs or gain, yet if then in that particular caſe the heart will ſtoop to Chriſt, it is a true ſign; for the trueſt trial of the power of grace is in ſuch particular caſes which touch us neareſt, for there our corruption maketh the greateſt head; when Chriſt came near home to the young man in the goſpel, he loſt a diſciple of him. 8. When we can practiſe duties pleaſing to Chriſt, though contrary to the fleſh, and the courſe of the world. And when we can overcome ourſelves in that evil, to which our nature is prone, and ſtandeth ſo much inclined unto, and which agreeth to the ſway of the times, and which others lie enthralled under, as deſire of revenge, hatred of enemies,

enemies, private ends, &c. then it appears that grace is in us above nature, heaven above earth, and will have the victory.

For the further clearing of this, and helping of us in our trial, we must know there are three degrees of victory. 1. When we resist, though we be foiled. 2. When grace gets the better, though with conflict. 3. When all corruption is perfectly subdued. Now when we have strength but only to resist, yet we may know Christ's government in us will be victorious, because what is said of the devil, is said of all our spiritual enemies, if we resist, they shall in time fly from us; because stronger is he that is in us, that taketh part with his own grace, than he that is in the world. And if we may hope for victory upon bare resistance, what may we not hope for, when the Spirit hath gotten the upper hand?

For the second, that is, directions. We must know, though Christ hath undertaken this victory, yet he accomplisheth it by training us up to fight his battles; he overcometh in us by making us wise unto salvation; and in what degree we believe Christ will conquer, in that degree we will endeavour by his grace that we may conquer; for faith is an obedient and a wise grace. Christ maketh us wise to ponder and weigh things, and thereupon to rank and order them so, as we may make the fittest choice of what is best. Some rules to help us in judging are these:

To judge of things as they help or hinder the main:—1. As they further or hinder our reckoning. 2. As they make us more or less spiritual. 3. And so bring us nearer to the fountain of goodness, God himself. 4. As they bring us peace or sorrow at the last. 5. As they commend us more or less to God, and wherein we shall approve ourselves to him. 6. Likewise to judge of things now, as we shall do hereafter, when the soul shall be best able to judge, as when we are under any public calamity, or at the hour of death, when the soul gathereth itself from all other things to itself. 7. Look back to former experience, see what is most agreeable unto it; what was best in our worst times. If grace is or was best then, it is best now. 8. Labour to judge of things as he doth, who must judge us, and as holy men judge, who are led by his Spirit; more particularly, 9. What those judge, that have no interest in any benefit that may come by the thing which is in question; for outward things blind the eyes even of the wise; we see papists are most corrupt in those things where their honour, ease or profit is engaged, but in the doctrine of the Trinity, which doth not touch upon these things, they are sound.

found. But it is not sufficient that our judgement are right, but likewise ready and strong.

1. Where Christ establisheth his government, he inspireth care to keep the judgement clear and fresh, for while the judgement standeth straight and firm, the whole frame of the soul continueth strong and impregnable. True judgement in us advanceth Christ, and Christ will advance it. All sin is either from false principles or ignorance, or heedlessness, or unbelief of truth. By inconsideration, and weakness of assent, Eve lost her hold at first. It is good therefore to store up true principles in our hearts, and to refresh them often, that in virtue of them our affections and actions may be more vigorous. When judgement is fortified, evil finds no entrance, but good things have a side within us, to entertain them. While true convincing light continueth, we not do the least ill of sin, for the greatest ill of punishment. "In vain is the net spread in the eyes "of that which hath wings." While the soul is kept aloft, there is little danger of snares below: we lose our high estimation of things, before we can be drawn to any sin.

2. And because knowledge and affection mutually help one another, it is good to keep up our affections of love and delight by all sweet inducements, and divine encouragements; for what the heart loveth best, the mind studieth most. Those that can bring their hearts to delight in Christ, know most of his ways. Wisdom loveth them that love her. Love is the best entertainer of truth, and when it is not entertained in the love of it, (being so lovely as it is) it leaveth the heart, and will stay no longer. It hath been a prevailing way to begin by withdrawing the love, to corrupt the judgement; because as we love, so we use to judge; and therefore it is hard to be affectionate and wise in earthly things, but in heavenly things, where there hath been a right information of the judgement before, the more our affections grow, the better and clearer our judgements will be, because our affections, though strong, can never rise high enough to the excellency of the things. We see in the martyrs, when the sweet doctrine of Christ had once caught their hearts, it could not be torn out again by all the torments the wit of cruelty could devise. If Christ hath once possessed the affections, there is no dispossessing of them again. A fire in the heart overcometh all fires without.

3. Wisdom likewise teacheth us, wherein our weakness lieth, and our enemies strength, whereby a jealous fear is stirred up in

us, by which we are preſerved. For out of this godly jealouſy we keep thoſe provocations which are active and working, from what is paſſive and catching in us, as we keep fire from powder. They that will hinder the generation of noiſome creatures, will hinder the conception firſt, by keeping male and female aſunder. This jealouſy will be much furthered, by obſerving ſtrictly what hath helped or hindered a gracious temper in us; and it will make us take heed that we conſult not with fleſh and blood in ourſelves or others. How elſe can we think that Chriſt will lead us on to victory, when we take counſel of his and our enemies?

4. Chriſt maketh us likewiſe careful to attend all means, whereby freſh thoughts and affections may be ſtirred up and preſerved in us. Chriſt ſo honoureth the uſe of means, and the care he putteth into us, that he aſcribeth both preſervation and victory unto our care of keeping ourſelves. "He that is begotten of "God keepeth himſelf;" 1 John iii. 18. but not by himſelf, but by the Lord, in dependence on him in the uſe of means. We are no longer ſafe, than wiſe to preſent ourſelves to all good advantages of acquaintance, &c. By going out of God's walks, we go out of his government, and ſo loſe our frame, and find ourſelves overſpread quickly with a contrary diſpoſition. When we draw near to Chriſt in his ordinances, he draws near to us.

5. Keep grace in exerciſe; it is not ſleepy habits, but grace in exerciſe that preſerveth us. Whilſt the ſoul is in ſome civil or ſacred employment, corruptions within us are much ſuppreſſed, and Satan's paſſages ſtopped, and the ſpirit hath a way open to enlarge itſelf in us, and likewiſe the guard of angels then moſt nearly attend us; which courſe often prevails more againſt our ſpiritual enemies than direct oppoſition. It ſtands upon Chriſt's honour to maintain thoſe that are employed in his works.

6. In all directions we muſt look up to Chriſt the quickening ſpirit, and reſolve in his ſtrength; though we are exhorted to "cleave to the Lord with full purpoſe of heart," Acts xi. 23. yet we muſt pray with David, Lord, for ever keep it in the thoughts of our hearts, and prepare our hearts unto thee: our hearts are of themſelves very looſe and unſettled, "Lord, unite "our hearts unto thee, to fear thy name," Pſ. lxxxvi. 11. or elſe without him our beſt purpoſes will fall to the ground. It is a pleaſing requeſt out of love to God, to beg ſuch a frame of ſoul from him, wherein he may take delight; and therefore in the uſe of all the means, we muſt ſend up our deſires and complaints

to

to heaven to him for ſtrength and help, and then we may be ſure, that he will bring forth judgement unto victory.

7. Laſtly, it furthers the ſtate of the ſoul, to know what frame it ſhould be in, that ſo we may order our ſouls accordingly; we ſhould always be fit for communion with God, and be heavenly-minded in earthly buſineſs, and be willing to be taken off from them, to redeem time for better things; we ſhould be ready at all times to depart hence, and to live in ſuch a condition, as we would be content to die in: we ſhould have hearts prepared for every good duty, open to all good occaſions, and ſhut to all temptations, keeping our watch, and being always ready armed: ſo far as we come ſhort of theſe things, ſo far we have juſt cauſe to be humbled, and yet preſs forward that we may gain more upon ourſelves, and make theſe things more familiar and lovely unto us; and when we find our ſouls any ways falling downwards, it is beſt to raiſe them up preſently by ſome waking meditations; as of the preſence of God, of the ſtrict reckoning we are to make, of the infinite love of God in Chriſt, and the fruits of it, of the excellency of a Chriſtian's calling, of the ſhort and uncertain time of this life: how little good, e'er long, will all thoſe things that ſteal away our hearts do us? and how will it be with us for ever hereafter, as we ſpend this life good or bad, &c.? the more we give way for ſuch conſiderations to ſink into our hearts, the more we ſhall riſe nearer to that ſtate of ſoul which we ſhall enjoy in heaven. When we grow regardleſs of keeping our ſouls, then God recovers our taſte of good things again, by ſharp croſſes; thus David, Solomon, Sampſon, &c. were recovered: it is much eaſier kept, than recovered.

Objection.—But notwithſtanding my ſtriving, I ſeem to ſtand at a ſtay.

Anſwer.—1. Grace, as the ſeed in the parable, grows we know not how, yet at length, when God ſeeth fitteſt, we ſhall ſee that all our endeavours have not been in vain; the tree falleth upon the laſt ſtroke, yet all the former ſtrokes help it forward.

2. Sometimes victory is ſuſpended, becauſe ſome Achan is not found out, or becauſe we are not humble enough: as Iſrael had the worſt againſt the Benjamites, till they faſted and prayed; or becauſe we betray our helps, and ſtand not upon our guard, and yield not preſently to the motions of the Spirit, which remind us always of the beſt things, if we would regard it. Our own conſcience will tell us, if we give them leave to

ſpeak, that ſome ſinful favouring of ourſelves is the cauſe. The way in this caſe to prevail is, 1. To get the victory over the pride of our own nature, by taking ſhame to ourſelves, in humble confeſſion to God; and then 2. To overcome the unbelief of our hearts, by yielding to the promiſe of pardon; and then 3. In confidence of Chriſt's aſſiſtance, to ſet ourſelves againſt thoſe ſins which have prevailed over us; and then, prevailing over ourſelves, we ſhall eaſily prevail over all other enemies, and conquer all conditions we ſhall be brought into.

Uſe 2.—If Chriſt will have the victory, then it is the beſt way for nations and ſtates to kiſs the Son, and to embrace Chriſt and his religion; to ſide with Chriſt, and to own his cauſe in the world; his ſide will prove the ſtrongeſt ſide at laſt; happy are we, if Chriſt honour us ſo much as to uſe our help to fight his battle againſt the mighty. True religion in a ſtate is as the main pillar of a houſe, or the ſtaff of a tent that upholds all; ſo for families, let Chriſt be the chief governor of the family; and let every one be as a houſe for Chriſt to dwell familiarly in, and to rule; where Chriſt is, all happineſs muſt follow. If Chriſt goeth, all will go; where Chriſt's government in his ordinances, and his ſpirit is, there all ſubordinate government will proſper. Religion inſpireth life and grace into all other things, and all virtues without it are as a fair picture without a head. Where Chriſt's laws are written in the heart, there all other good laws are beſt obeyed: none deſpiſe man's law, but thoſe that deſpiſe Chriſt's firſt. Of all perſons, a man guided by Chriſt is the beſt, and of all creatures in the world, a man guided by will and affection is the worſt. The happineſs of weaker things ſtands in being ruled by ſtronger; it is beſt for a blind man to be guided by him that hath ſight; it is beſt for all ſhiftleſs creatures to be guided by man, and it is happieſt for man to be guided by Chriſt, becauſe his government is ſo victorious, that it frees us from the fear and danger of our greateſt enemies, and tends to bring us to the greateſt happineſs that our nature is capable of. This ſhould make us to joy, when Chriſt reigneth in us. When Solomon was crowned, the people ſhouted, ſo that the earth rang; much more ſhould we rejoice in Chriſt our King. And likewiſe for thoſe, whoſe ſouls are dear unto us, that Chriſt may reign in them alſo, that they may be baptiſed by Chriſt with this fire, that theſe ſparks may be kindled in them. Men labour to cheriſh the ſpirit and temper of thoſe they train up, becauſe they think they will have uſe for it in the manifold affairs and troubles of this life. O let us cheriſh the ſparks of grace in them! for a natural

natural ſpirit in great troubles will fail, but theſe ſparks will make them conquerors over the greateſt evils.

Uſe 3.—If Chriſt's judgement ſhall be victorious, then popery being an oppoſite frame, ſet up by the device of man, to maintain ſtately idleneſs, muſt fall: and it is fallen already in the hearts of thoſe upon whom Chriſt hath ſhined. It is a lye, and founded upon a lye, upon the infallible judgement of a man ſubject to ſin and error. When that which is taken for a principle of truth, becomes a principle of error, the more relying upon it, the more danger.

Concluſion.—It is not only ſaid, judgement ſhall be victorious, but that Chriſt will bring it openly forth to victory. Whence we obſerve, that grace ſhall be glory, and run into the eyes of all. Now Chriſt doth conquer, and hath his own ends; but it is in ſome ſort inviſibly: his enemies within and without us, ſeem to have the better. But he will bring forth judgement unto victory, to the view of all. The wicked that now ſhut their eyes, ſhall ſee it to their torment. It ſhall not be in the power of ſubtle men to ſee or not ſee what they would; Chriſt will have power over their hearts, and as his wrath ſhall immediately ſeize upon their ſouls againſt their wills, ſo will he have power over the eyes of their ſouls, to ſee and know what will increaſe their miſery; grief ſhall be faſtened to all their ſenſes, and their ſenſes to grief.

Then all the falſe gloſſes which they put upon things, ſhall be wiped away. Men are deſirous to have the reputation of good, and yet the ſweetneſs of ill; nothing ſo cordially oppoſed by them, as that truth which layeth them open to themſelves, and to the eyes of others, their chief care being to keep fair with the world and their own conſciences. But the time will come, when they ſhall be driven out of this fools paradiſe, and the more ſubtle their conveyance of things hath been, the more ſhall be their ſhame. Chriſt, whom God hath choſen to ſet forth the chief glory of his excellencies, is now veiled in regard of his body the church, but will come e'er long to be glorious in his ſaints; and not loſe the clear manifeſtation of any of his attributes, and will declare to all the world what he is. When there ſhall be no glory but that of Chriſt and his ſpouſe, thoſe that are as ſmoaking flax now, ſhall then ſhine as the ſun in the firmament, and their righteouſneſs break forth as the noon-day.

The image of God in Adam had a commanding majeſty in it,

ſo that all creatures reverenced him, much more ſhall the image of God, in the perfection of it, command reſpect in all. Even now there is a ſacred awe put into the hearts of the greateſt, towards thoſe in whom they ſee any grace to ſhine; from whence it was that Herod feared John the Baptiſt; but what will this be in their day of bringing forth, which is called the day of the revelation of the ſons of God!

There will be more glorious times, when "the kingdoms of "the earth, ſhall be the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's;" and he ſhall reign for ever: then ſhall judgement and truth have its victory. Then Chriſt will plead his own cauſe; truth ſhall no longer be called hereſy and ſchiſm, nor hereſy catholic doctrine; wickedneſs ſhall no longer go maſked and diſguiſed, godlineſs ſhall appear in its own luſtre, and ſhine in its own beams; things ſhall be what they are; nothing is hidden, but ſhall be laid open. Iniquity ſhall not be carried in a myſtery any longer. Deep diſſemblers that think to hide their counſels from the Lord, ſhall walk no longer inviſible as in the clouds.

Uſe.—If this were believed, men would make more account of ſincerity, which only will give us boldneſs, and not ſeek to cover ſhame; the confidence whereof, as it maketh men now more preſumptuous, ſo it will expoſe them hereafter to the greater ſhame.

If judgement ſhall be brought forth to victory, then thoſe that have been ruled by their own deceitful hearts, and a ſpirit of error, ſhall be brought forth to diſgrace: that God that hath joined grace and truth with honour, hath joined ſin and ſhame together at the laſt; all the wiſdom and power of man can never be able to part what God hath coupled. Truth and piety may be trampled upon for a time, but as the two witneſſes after they were ſlain roſe again and ſtood upon their feet; ſo whatſoever is of God ſhall at length ſtand upon its own bottom. There ſhall be a reſurrection, not only of bodies, but of credits. Can we think, that he that threw the angels out of heaven, will ſuffer duſt and worm's meat to run a contrary courſe, and to carry it always? No; as verily as Chriſt is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ſo will he daſh all thoſe pieces of earth that riſe up againſt him, as a potter's veſſel. Pſal. ii. "Was there ever any fierce "againſt God, and proſpered?" Job ix. 4. No; doubtleſs the rage of man ſhall turn to Chriſt's praiſe. What was ſaid of Pharoah ſhall be ſaid of all headſtrong enemies, who had rather loſe their

their ſouls than their wills; that they are but raiſed up for Chriſt, to get himſelf glory in their confuſion.

Let us then take heed that we follow not the ways of thoſe men, whoſe end we ſhall tremble at. There is not a more fearful judgement can befall the nature of man, than to be given up to a reprobate judgement of perſons and things, becauſe it cometh under a woe, to call evil good, and good evil.

How will they be laden with curſes another day that abuſe the judgement of others by ſophiſtry and flattery, deceivers, and being deceived? Then the complaint of our firſt mother Eve will be taken up, but fruitleſsly; the ſerpent hath deceived me, Satan in ſuch and ſuch hath deceived me. Sin hath deceived me, a fooliſh heart hath deceived me. It is one of the higheſt points of wiſdom, to conſider upon what grounds we venture our ſouls. Happy men will they be, who have by Chriſt's light, a right judgement of things, and ſuffer that judgement to prevail over their hearts!

The ſoul of moſt men is drowned in their ſenſes, and carried away with weak opinions, raiſed from vulgar miſtakes, and ſhadows of things. And Satan is ready to enlarge the imagination of outward good, and outward evil, and make it greater than it is, and ſpiritual things leſs, preſenting them through falſe glaſſes. And ſo men truſting in vanity, vaniſh themſelves in their own apprehenſions. A woful condition, when both we, and that which we highly eſteem, ſhall vaniſh together, which will be as truly as Chriſt's judgement ſhall come to victory; and in what meaſure the vain heart of man hath been enlarged to conceive a greater good in things of this world than there is, by ſo much the ſoul ſhall be enlarged to be more ſenſible of miſery when it ſees its error. This is the difference betwixt a godly wiſe man, and a deluded worldling; that which the one doth now judge to be vain, the other ſhall hereafter feel to be ſo, when it is too late. But this is the vanity of our natures, that though we ſhun above all things to be deceived and miſtaken in preſent things; yet in the greateſt matters of all we are willingly ignorant and miſled.

The fourth concluſion is, That this government is ſet up and advanced by Chriſt alone. He bringeth judgement to victory. We both fight and prevail in the power of his might, we overcome by the Spirit, obtained by the blood of the Lamb.

It is he alone that "teacheth our hands to war, and our fin-"gers to fight," Pſal. cxliv. 1. Nature, as corrupted, favours

its own being, and will maintain itself against Christ's government. Nature, simply considered, cannot raise itself to actions spiritual of a higher order and nature, therefore the divine power of Christ is necessary to carry us above all our own strength, especially in duties wherein we meet with greater opposition; for there, not only nature will fail us, but ordinary grace, unless there be a stronger and a new supply. In taking up a burden that is weightier than ordinary, if there be not a greater proportion of strength than weight, the undertaker will sink under it. So to every strong encounter there must be a new supply of strength: as in Peter, when he was assaulted with a stronger temptation, not being upheld and shored up with a mightier hand, notwithstanding former strength, foully fell. And being fallen, in our raising up again, it is Christ that must do the work; by removing and weakening, or suspending opposite hindrances, and by advancing the power of his grace in us to a further degree than we had before we fell; therefore when we are fallen, and by falling, bruised, let us go to Christ presently to bind us up again.

Use.—Let us know therefore, that it is dangerous to look for that from ourselves, which we must have from Christ. Since the fall, all our strength lies in him, as Sampson's in his hair; we are but subordinate agents, moving as we are moved, and working as we are first wrought upon, free so far as we are freed, no wiser nor stronger than he makes us to be for the present in any thing we undertake. It is his Spirit that actuateth and enliveneth, and applieth that knowledge and strength we have, or else it faileth and lieth useless in us; we work when we work upon a present strength, therefore dependent spirits are the wisest and the ablest. Nothing is stronger than humility, that goeth out of itself; or weaker than pride, that resteth upon its own bottom: and this should the rather be observed, because naturally we affect a kind of divinity, in setting upon actions in the strength of our own parts; whereas Christ saith, "without me you can do nothing," he doth not say, you can do a little, but nothing; therefore in all (especially difficult encounters) let us lift up our hearts to Christ, who hath strength enough for us, in all our exigencies; and say with good Jehosaphat, "Lord, we know not what to do, but our eyes are to-"wards thee." The battle we fight is thine, and the strength whereby we fight must be thine: if thou goest not out with us, we are sure to fall. Satan knows nothing can prevail against

againſt Chriſt, or thoſe that rely on his power; therefore his ſtudy is, how to keep us in ourſelves, and in the creature: but we muſt carry always in our minds, that what is begun in ſelf-confidence will end in ſhame.

The manner of Chriſt's bringing forth judgement to victory, is by letting us ſee a neceſſity of dependence upon him: hence proceed thoſe ſpiritual deſertions, wherein he often leaveth us to ourſelves, both in regard of grace and comfort, that we may know the ſpring-head of theſe to be out of ourſelves. Hence it is, that in the Mount, that is, in extremities, God is moſt ſeen. Hence it is that we are ſaved by the grace of faith, that carrieth us out of ourſelves to rely upon another; and that faith worketh beſt alone, when it hath leaſt outward ſupport. Hence it is that we often fail in leſſer conflicts, and ſtand out in greater, becauſe in leſs we reſt more in ourſelves; in greater we fly to the rock of our ſalvation which is higher than we. Hence likewiſe it is, that we are ſtronger after foils, becauſe hidden corruption undiſcerned before, is now diſcovered, and thence we are brought to make uſe of mercy pardoning, and power ſupporting. One main ground of this diſpenſation, is, that we ſhould know it is Chriſt that giveth both the will and the deed: and that as a voluntary worker, according to his own good pleaſure. And therefore we ſhould work out our ſalvation in a jealous fear and trembling, leſt by unreverent and preſumptuous walking, we give him cauſe to ſuſpend his gracious influence, and to leave us to the darkneſs of our own heart.

Thoſe that are under Chriſt's government, have the ſpirit of revelation, whereby they ſee and feel a divine power ſweetly and ſtrongly enabling them to preſerve faith when they feel the contrary, and hope in a ſtate hopeleſs, and love God under ſigns of his diſpleaſure, and heavenly mindedneſs, in the midſt of worldly affairs and allurements drawing a contrary way: they feel a power preſerving patience, nay joy in the midſt of cauſes of mourning, inward peace in the midſt of aſſaults. To make ſo little grace ſo victorious over ſo great a maſs of corruption, this requireth a ſpirit more than human; this is as to preſerve fire in the ſea, and a part of heaven as it were in hell. Here we know where to have this power, and to whom to return the praiſe of it. And it is our happineſs, that it is ſo ſafely hid in Chriſt for us, in one ſo near unto God and us. Since the fall, God will not truſt us with our own ſalvation, but it is both purchaſed and kept by Chriſt for us, and we for it through faith, wrought

wrought by the power of God, and laying hold of the ſame: which power is glorioufly ſet forth by St Paul, 1. To be a great power; 2. An exceeding power; 3. A working and a mighty power; 4. Such a power as was wrought in raiſing Chriſt from the dead. That grace which is but a perſuaſive offer, and in our pleaſure to receive or refuſe, is not that grace which brings us to heaven; but God's people feel a powerful work of the Spirit, not only revealing unto us our miſery, and delivering through Chriſt, but emptying us of ourſelves as being redeemed from ourſelves, and infuſing new life into us, and then ſtrengthening us, and quickening of us, when we droop and hang the wing, and never leaving us till perfect conqueſt.

The fifth concluſion is, that this prevailing government ſhall not be without fighting; there is no victory where there is no combat; in Iſaiah xlii. 3. it is ſaid, "he ſhall bring forth judgement unto truth;" here it is ſaid, "he ſhall ſend forth judgement unto victory." The words *ſend forth* have a ſtronger ſenſe in the original, to ſend forth with force, to ſhew, that where his government is in truth, it will be oppoſed, until he getteth the upper hand. Nothing is ſo oppoſed, as Chriſt and his government, both within us, and without us. And within us moſt in our firſt converſion, though corruption prevails not ſo far as to make void the powerful work of grace, yet there is not only a poſſibility of oppoſing, but a proneneſs to oppoſe, and not only a proneneſs, but an actual withſtanding the working of Chriſt's Spirit, and that in every action, but yet no prevailing reſiſtance, ſo far as to make void the work of grace, but corruption in the iſſue yields to grace.

There is much ado to bring Chriſt into the heart, and to ſettle a tribunal for him to judge there; there is an army of luſts that mutiny againſt him. The utmoſt ſtrength of moſt men's endeavours and parts is, to keep Chriſt from ruling in the ſoul, the fleſh ſtill laboureth to maintain its own regency, and therefore it cries down the credit of whatſoever croſſeth it, as God's bleſſed ordinances, &c. and highly prizeth any thing, though never ſo dead and empty, if it give way to the liberty of the fleſh.

And no marvel if the ſpiritual government of Chriſt be ſo oppoſed, becauſe, 1. It is government, and that limits the courſe of the will, and caſteth a bridle upon its wanderings, every thing naturally reſiſts what oppoſeth it; ſo the corrupt will labours to bear down all laws, and counteth it a generous thing not to be awed, and an argument of a low ſpirit to fear any, even God himſelf,

himſelf, until unavoidable danger ſeizeth on men, and then thoſe that feared leaſt when out of danger, fear moſt in danger, as we ſee in Belſhazzar.

2. It is ſpiritual government, and therefore the leſs will fleſh endure it: Chriſt's government bringeth the very thoughts and deſires, which are the moſt immediate and free iſſue of the ſoul, into obedience; though a man were of ſo compoſed a carriage that his whole life were free from outwardly offenſive breaches, yet with Chriſt, to be "carnal or worldly minded is death," he looketh on a worldly mind with greater deteſtation than any one particular offence.

Objection.—But Chriſt's Spirit is in thoſe who are in ſome meaſure earthly minded?

Anſwer.—True it is, but not as an allower and maintainer, but as an oppoſer, ſubduer, and in the end, as a conqueror. Carnal men would fain bring Chriſt and the fleſh together, and could be content with ſome reſervation to ſubmit to Chriſt, but Chriſt will be no underling to any baſe affection; and therefore where there is allowance of ourſelves in any ſinful luſt, it is a ſign the keys were never given up to Chriſt to rule us.

3. Becauſe it is judgement, and men love not to be judged and cenſured. Now Chriſt in his truth arraigneth them, giveth ſentence againſt them, and bindeth them over to the latter judgement of the great day: and therefore they take upon them to judge that truth that muſt judge them, but truth will be too good for them. Man hath a day now, which St Paul calls man's day, wherein he getteth upon his bench, and uſurpeth a judgement over Chriſt and his ways; but God hath a day, wherein he will ſet all ſtraight, and his judgement ſhall ſtand. And the ſaints ſhall have their time, when they ſhall ſit in judgement upon them that judge them now. In the mean time, Chriſt will rule in the midſt of his enemies, in the midſt of our hearts.

Uſe.—It is therefore no ſign of a good condition, to find all quiet, and nothing at variance. For, can we think, that corruption which is the elder in us, and Satan the ſtrong man, that keepeth many holds in us, will quietly yield poſſeſſion? No, there is not ſo much as a thought of goodneſs diſcovered by him, but he joineth with corruption to kill it in the birth. And as Pharoah's cruelty was eſpecially againſt the male children; ſo Satan's malice is eſpecially againſt the moſt religious and manly reſolutions.

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This, then, we are always to expect, that whereſoever Chriſt cometh, there will be oppoſition. When Chriſt was born, all Jeruſalem was troubled; ſo when Chriſt is born in any man, the ſoul is in an uproar, and all becauſe the heart is unwilling to yield up itſelf to Chriſt to rule it.

Whereſoever Chriſt cometh, he breedeth diviſion, not only between man and himſelf, but between man and man, and between church and church; of which diſturbance Chriſt is no more the cauſe, than phyſic is of trouble in a diſtempered body, of which noiſome humours are the proper cauſe, for the end of phyſic is the expelling of humours. But Chriſt thinketh it fit that the thoughts of men's hearts ſhould be diſcovered; and he is as well for the falling, as the riſing of many in Iſrael.

Thus the deſperate madneſs of men is laid open, that they had rather be under the guidance of their own luſts, and by conſequent of Satan himſelf to their endleſs deſtruction, than put their feet into Chriſt's fetters, and their necks under his yoke; whereas indeed Chriſt's ſervice is the only true liberty, his yoke an eaſy yoke, his burden but as the burden of wings to a bird, that make her fly the higher. Satan's government is rather a bondage than a government, unto which Chriſt giveth up thoſe that ſhake off his own, for then he giveth Satan and his factors power over them, ſince they will not receive the truth in love, take him Jeſuit, take him Satan, blind him, and bind him, and lead him to perdition. Thoſe that take the moſt liberty to ſin, are the moſt perfect ſlaves, becauſe moſt voluntary ſlaves, their will in every thing is either the beſt or the worſt, the further men go on in a wilful courſe, the deeper they ſink in rebellion; the more they croſs Chriſt, doing what they will, the more they ſhall one day ſuffer what they would not. In the mean time they are priſoners in their own ſouls, bound over in their conſciences to the judgement of him after death, whoſe judgement they would have none of in their lives. And it is not equal that they ſhould feel him a ſevere judge to condemn them, whom they would not have a mild judge to rule them?

For concluſion, and general application of all that hath been ſpoken, unto ourſelves. We ſee the conflicting, but yet ſure and hopeful ſtate of God's people. The victory lieth not upon us, but upon Chriſt, who hath taken upon him as to conquer for us, ſo to conquer in us. The victory lieth neither in our own ſtrength to get, nor in our enemies to defeat it. If it lay upon us,

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we might juſtly fear. But Chriſt will maintain his own government in us, and take our part againſt our corruptions; they are his enemies as well as ours. "Let us, therefore, be ſtrong in "the Lord, and in the power of his might;" let us not look ſo much who are our enemies, as who is our judge and captain; not what they threaten, but what he promiſeth; we have more for us, than againſt us. What coward would not fight, when he is ſure of victory? none are here overcome, but he that will not fight. Therefore, when any baſe fainting ſeizeth upon us, let us lay the blame where it is to be laid. We ſee here what we may look for from heaven. O beloved, it is a comfortable thing to conceive of Chriſt aright, to know what love, mercy, and ſtrength, we have laid up for us in the breaſt of Chriſt. A good opinion of the phyſician, we ſay, is half the cure; let us not ſuffer Satan to transform Chriſt unto us, to be otherwiſe than he is to thoſe that are his. Let us make uſe of this his mercy and power every day, in our daily combats; Chriſt will not leave us, till he hath made us like himſelf, all glorious within and without, and preſented us blameleſs before his Father.—What a comfort is this in our conflicts with our unruly hearts, that it ſhall not always be thus! let us ſtrive a little while, and we ſhall be happy for ever. Let us think, when we are troubled with our ſins, that Chriſt hath this in charge of his Father, that he ſhall not quench the ſmoaking flax, until he hath ſubdued all. This putteth a ſhield into our hands, to beat back all the fiery darts of Satan. He will object, 1. Thou art a great ſinner; we may anſwer, Chriſt is a ſtrong Saviour; but he will object, 2. Thou haſt no faith, no love; Yes, a ſpark of faith and love; 3. But Chriſt will not regard that; Yes, he will not quench the ſmoaking flax. 4. But this is ſo little and weak, that it will vaniſh, and come to nought; Nay, but Chriſt will cheriſh it until he hath brought forth judgement to victory. And thus much for our comfort we have already, that even when we firſt believed, we overcame God himſelf, as it were, by believing the pardon of all our ſins; notwithſtanding the guilt of our own conſciences, and his abſolute juſtice. Now, having been prevailers with God, what ſhall ſtand againſt us, if we learn to make uſe of our faith?

O what confuſion is this to Satan, that he ſhould labour to blow out a poor ſpark, and yet ſhould not be able to quench it; that a grain of muſtard-ſeed ſhould be ſtronger than the gates of hell; that it ſhould be able to remove mountains of oppoſitions and temptations, caſt up by Satan and our rebellious hearts, between

tween God and us? Abimelech could not endure that it ſhould be ſaid, a woman had ſlain him, and it muſt needs be a torment to Satan, that a weak child, a woman, or decrepit old man, ſhould by a ſpirit of faith put him to flight.

Since there is ſuch comfort, where there is a little truth of grace, that it will be ſo victorious—let us often try what God hath wrought in us, ſearch our good, as well as our evil, and be thankful to God for the leaſt meaſure of grace, more than for any outward thing; it will be of more uſe and comfort than all this world, which paſſeth away and cometh to nothing. Yea, let us be thankful for that promiſed and aſſured victory, which we may rely upon without preſumption, as St Paul doth, 1 Cor. xv. 57. "Thanks be to God, that hath given us the victory in "Jeſus Chriſt." See a flame in a ſpark, a tree in a ſeed; ſee great things in little beginnings; look not ſo much to the beginning, as to the perfection, and ſo we ſhall be in ſome degree joyful in ourſelves, and thankful unto Chriſt.

And let all this that hath been ſpoken, allure thoſe that are not yet in a ſtate of grace, to come under Chriſt's ſweet and victorious government; for though we ſhall have much oppoſition, yet if we ſtrive, he will help us; if we fail, he will cheriſh us; if we be guided by him, we ſhall overcome; if we overcome, we are ſure to be crowned. And for the preſent ſtate of the church we ſee now how forlorn it is, yet let us comfort ourſelves, that Chriſt's cauſe ſhall prevail. "Chriſt will rule, till he hath made "his enemies his footſtool," Pſa. cx. 1. not only to trample upon, but to help him up to mount higher in glory. "Baby-"lon ſhall fall, for ſtrong is the Lord who hath condemned "her," Rev. xviii. 8. Chriſt's judgement, not only in his children, but alſo againſt his enemies, ſhall be victorious, for he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. God will not ſuffer Antichriſt and his ſupporters to revel and ruffle in the church as they do.

If we look to the preſent ſtate of the church of Chriſt, it is as Daniel in the midſt of lions, as a lilly amongſt thorns, as a ſhip not only toſſed, but almoſt covered with waves. It is ſo low, that the enemies think they have buried Chriſt in regard of his goſpel, in the grave, and there they think to keep him from riſing; but Chriſt as he roſe in his perſon, ſo he will roll away all ſtones, and riſe again in his church. How little ſupport hath the church and cauſe of Chriſt at this day? how ſtrong a conſpiracy is againſt it? The ſpirit of Antichriſt is now lifted up;

and

and marcheth furiouſly; things ſeem to hang on a ſmall and inviſible thread. But our comfort is, that Chriſt liveth and reigneth, and ſtandeth on Mount Sion, in defence of them that ſtand for him; and when ſtates and kingdoms ſhall daſh one againſt another, Chriſt will have care of his own children and cauſe, ſeeing there is nothing in the world that he ſo much eſteemeth. At this very time, the delivery of his church, and the ruin of his enemies is in working; we ſee not things in motion till Chriſt hath done his work, and then we ſhall ſee that the Lord reigneth. Chriſt and his church, when they are at the loweſt, are neareſt riſing; his enemies at the higheſt, are neareſt a downfall.

The Jews are not yet come in under Chriſt's banner, but God that perſuaded Japhet to come into the tents of Shem, will perſuade Shem to come into the tents of Japhet. The fulneſs of the Gentiles is not yet come in, but Chriſt that hath the utmoſt parts of the earth given him for his poſſeſſion, will gather all the ſheep his Father hath given him into one fold, that there may be one ſheepfold, and one ſhepherd.

The faithful Jews rejoiced to think of the calling of the Gentiles; and why ſhould not we joy to think of the calling of the Jews?

The goſpel's courſe hath hitherto been as the ſun, from eaſt to weſt, and ſo in God's time may proceed yet further weſt. No creature can hinder the courſe of the ſun, nor ſtop the influence of heaven, nor hinder the blowing of the wind, much leſs hinder the prevailing power of divine truth, until Chriſt hath brought all under one head, and then he will preſent all to his Father; Theſe are they thou haſt given unto me; theſe are they that have taken me for their Lord and King, that have ſuffered with me. My will is, that they be where I am, and reign with me. And then he will deliver up the kingdom even to his Father, and put down all other rule, and authority, and power.

Let us then bring our hearts to holy reſolutions, and ſet ourſelves upon that which is good, and againſt that which is evil, in ourſelves or others, according to our callings; upon this encouragement, that Chriſt's grace and power ſhall go along with us. What had become of that great work of reformation of religion in the latter ſpring of the goſpel, if men had not been armed with invincible courage to face all dangers, upon this faith, that the cauſe was Chriſt's, and that he would not be wanting to his own cauſe? Luther ingenuouſly confeſſed, that he carried matters

ters often inconſiderately, and with mixture of paſſion, but upon acknowledgement, God took not advantage of his errors, but the cauſe being God's, and his aims being holy, to promote the truth, and being a mighty man in prayer, and ſtrong in faith, God by him kindled that fire, which all the world ſhall never be able to quench. According to our faith, ſo is our encouragement to all duties, therefore let us ſtrengthen faith that it may ſtrengthen all other graces. This very belief, that faith ſhall be victorious, is a means to make it ſo indeed. Believe it therefore, that though it be often as ſmoaking flax, yet it ſhall prevail. If it prevail with God himſelf in trials, ſhall it not prevail over all other oppoſition? Let us wait a while, and we ſhall ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.

The Lord reveal himſelf more and more unto us in the face of his Son, Jeſus Chriſt, and magnify the power of his grace, in cheriſhing thoſe beginnings of grace in the midſt of our corruptions; and ſanctify the conſideration of our own infirmities, to humble us, and of his tender mercy to encourage us; and perſuade us, that ſince he hath taken us into the covenant of grace, he will not caſt us off for thoſe corruptions, which as they grieve his Spirit, ſo they make us vile in our own eyes: and becauſe Satan labours to obſcure the glory of his mercy, and hinder our comfort by diſcouragements; the Lord add this to the reſt of his mercies, that ſince he is ſo gracious to thoſe that yield to his government, we may make the right uſe of this grace, and not loſe any portion of comfort that is laid up for us in Chriſt. And may he vouchſafe to let the prevailing power of his Spirit in us, be an evidence of the truth of grace begun, and a pledge of final victory, at that time when he will be all in all, in all his, for all eternity. *Amen!*

THE

A

DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST;

IN

HIS NEARNESS TO GOD—HIS CALLING—HIS QUALIFICATION—HIS EXECUTION OF HIS CALLING.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

THREE SERMONS,

FROM

MATT. xii. 18.—*Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgement to the Gentiles; he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets, &c.*

THE words are the accompliſhment of a prophecy taken out of Iſaiah xlii. as we may ſee by the former verſe, That it might be fulfilled. Now the occaſion of bringing them in here in this verſe, it is a charge that Chriſt gives, verſe 16.—That they ſhould not diſcover and make him known for the miracles he did; he withdraws himſelf, he was deſirous to be concealed, he would not live to the view overmuch: for he knew the rebellious diſpoſition of the Jews, that were willing to change their government, and to make him king, therefore he laboured to conceal himſelf all kind of ways; now upon this charge, that they ſhall tell nobody, he brings in the prophet Iſaiah propheſying of him, "Behold my ſervant, &c. he ſhall "not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the "ſtreets." Other kings labour that their pomp and magnificence may be ſeen, but he ſhall not mind oſtentation; he ſhall not be contentious or clamorous; for theſe three things are meant when he ſaith "he ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall

" his voice be heard in the ſtreets;" he ſhall not yield to any oſtentation: for he came in an abaſed ſtate to work our ſalvation, he ſhall not be contentious, nor yet clamorous in matter of wrong; there ſhall be no boaſting any kind of way, as we ſhall ſee when we come to the words; you ſee then the inference here.

The inference in the prophet Iſaiah is to comfort the people, and to direct them how to come to worſhip the true God, after he had declaimed againſt their idolatry, as we ſee in the former chapter, " Behold my ſervant," &c. Great princes have their ambaſſadors, and the great God of heaven hath his Son, his ſervant in whom he delights, through whom, and by whom, all intercourſe between God and man is.

It is uſual in the prophecies, eſpecially of Iſaiah, that evangelical prophet, when he foretells any thing comfortable to the people, in the promiſe of temporal things he riſeth to eſtabliſh their faith in better things, by adding thereto a prophecy, and a promiſe of Chriſt the Meſſias, to inſinuate this much, I will ſend you the Meſſias, that is a greater gift than this that I have promiſed you, therefore you may be ſure of the leſs, as the apoſtle reaſons excellently, Rom. viii. " If he ſpared not his own Son, " but delivered him to death for us all, how ſhall he not with " him give us all things?" So here, I have promiſed you deliverance out of Babylon, and this and that, do you doubt of the performance? Alas! what is that in compariſon of a greater favour I intend you in Chriſt, that ſhall deliver you out of another manner of Babylon, " Behold my ſervant whom I have choſen;" and in Iſaiah vii. " Behold a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a " ſon," &c. I will ſend you the Meſſias, God ſhall become man, therefore I will not ſtand for any outward favour or deliverance whatſoever. So he goes to the grand promiſe, that they might reaſon from the greater to the leſs.

2. There is another end, why in other promiſes, there is mention of the promiſe of the Meſſias to uphold their faith. Alas! we are unworthy of theſe promiſes, we are laden with ſin and iniquity. It is no matter, I will ſend you the Meſſias, " Behold " my ſervant in whom my ſoul delighteth," for his ſake I will delight in you; I am well pleaſed with you, becauſe I am well pleaſed in him, therefore be not diſcouraged; " All the promiſes are yea and amen in Jeſus Chriſt;" 2 Cor. i. 19. For all the promiſes that be, (though they be for the things of this life) they are made for Chriſt, they are yea in him, and they are performed for his ſake, they are amen in him. So much for the occaſion

of

of the inference in the evangeliſt St Matthew, and likewiſe in the prophet Iſaiah.

To come more directly to the words—" Behold my ſervant " whom I have choſen, my beloved, in whom my ſoul is well " pleaſed," &c.

In the words, you have a deſcription of Chriſt, in his nearneſs to God, " Behold my ſervant, whom I have choſen, my " beloved, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed.

And then his calling and qualification, " I will put my Spirit " upon him."

And the execution of that calling, " He ſhall ſhew judgement " to the Gentiles."

Then the quiet and peaceable manner of the execution of his calling, " He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man " hear his voice in the ſtreets," &c.

" Behold"—This word is as it were a beacon lighted up to all the reſt; in all the evangeliſts you have this word often repeated, and the prophets likewiſe, when they ſpeak of Chriſt, there is no prophecy almoſt but there is this word *Behold*.

Why? Not to ſpend time in the variety of acceptations, but to ſpeak of it as may ſerve for the preſent purpoſe. The uſe of it in the prophet, eſpecially out of which theſe words are taken, was to preſent Chriſt to the hearts of the people of God then, therefore he ſaith, " Behold," for Chriſt was preſent to the believers then, he did profit before he was, he did good before he was exhibited, becauſe he was the Lamb of God, ſlain from the beginning of the world, he was yeſterday as well as to-day, and to-morrow as well as to-day; yeſterday, to-day, and the ſame for ever: he was preſent to their faith, and preſent to them in types and ſacrifices, and preſent in God's acceptation of him for them; therefore the prophets mount up with the wings of prophecy, and in regard of the certainty of the things to come, they ſpeak as if they were preſent, as if they had looked on Chriſt preſent, " Behold my ſervant," and " Behold a virgin," &c.

2. But that is not all, another uſe of this word *Behold*, was, to call the people's minds from their miſeries, and from other abaſing objects that dejected them, and might force deſpair: why do you dwell on your unworthineſs and ſin? raiſe up your minds, " Behold my ſervant whom I have choſen," &c. This is an

object worth beholding and admiring, especially by a distressed soul that may see in Christ whatsoever may comfort it.

3. A third end of it is, To raise the mind from any vulgar, common, base things; you look on these things, and are carried away with common trivial objects, as the poor disciples when they came to the temple, they stood wondering at the stones: What wondrous stones? what goodly buildings are here? So shallow-minded men, when they see any earthly excellency, they stand gazing: Alas! saith Christ, do you wonder at these things? So the prophet here raiseth up the minds of men to look on an object fit to be looked on, "Behold my servant," &c. So that the Holy Ghost would have them from this saving object, Christ, to raise satisfaction to their souls every way: are you dejected? here is comfort; are you sinful? here is righteousness; are you led away with present contentments? here you have honours, and pleasures, and all in Christ Jesus; you have a right to the common pleasures that others have, and besides them, you have interest in others that are everlasting pleasures, and shall never fail; so that there is nothing that is dejecting and abasing in man, but there is comfort for it in Christ Jesus; he is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady, therefore, behold my servant.

This word *Behold*, is a word of wonder, and indeed in Christ there is a world of wonders, every thing is wonderful in him. Things new are wonderful, and things rare, and things that are great, that transcend our capacity, are wonderful, that which stops our understanding that it cannot go through them, vulgar things we see through them quickly, but when we see things that stay our understandings, that raise our understandings higher, and that are more capacious than our understandings, here is matter of admiration and wonder. Now, whatsoever may cause wonder is in Jesus Christ, whose name is Wonderful, as it is in Isaiah ix. 7. therefore the prophet saith, Behold.

"My servant."—Christ is called a servant, first, in respect of his creation, because being man, as a creature he was a servant, but that is not all.

2. He was a servant in respect of his condition: servant implies a base and low condition; Phil. ii. "Christ took upon him "the form of a servant," he emptied himself, he was the lowest of all servants in condition: for none was ever so abased as our glorious Saviour.

3. And

3. And then, it is a name of office, as well as of baſe condition. There are ordinary ſervants, and extraordinary, as great kings have their ſervants of ſtate. Chriſt, beſides his abaſement, he was a ſervant of ſtate, he was an ambaſſador ſent from the great God, a prophet, a prieſt, and a king, as we ſhall ſee afterwards, an extraordinary ſervant to do a piece of ſervice that all the angels in heaven, and all the men on the earth joined together, could not perform; this great maſter-piece of ſervice was to bring God and man together again that were at variance, as it is, 1 Pet. iii. 18. "To bring us to God;" we were ſevered and ſcattered from God, his office was to gather us together again, to bring us all to one head again, to bring us to himſelf, and ſo to God, to reconcile us, as the ſcripture phraſe is. Now it being the greateſt work and ſervice that ever was, it required the greateſt ſervant, for no creature in the world could perform it, all the angels of heaven would have ſunk under this ſervice, to have undergone ſatisfaction to divine juſtice: for the angels themſelves when they ſinned, they could not recover themſelves, but ſunk under their own ſin eternally. Thus we ſee how he is God's ſervant, who ſet him apart and choſe him to this ſervice.

And then, he was a ſervant to us, for "the Son of man came "to miniſter, not to be miniſtered unto," he waſhed his diſciples feet, he was a ſervant to us, becauſe he did our work, and ſuffered our puniſhment, we made him ſerve by our ſins, as the prophet ſaith; he is a ſervant that bears another man's burden; there was a double burden, of obedience active, and obedience paſſive; he bore them both, he came under the law for us, both doing what we ſhould have done, and indeed far more acceptably, and ſuffering that which we ſhould have ſuffered, and far more acceptably, he being our ſurety, being a more excellent perſon, he did bear our burden, and did our work, therefore he was God's ſervant, and our ſervant, and God's ſervant, becauſe he was our ſervant, becauſe he came to do a work which belonged to us.

Herein appears the admirable love and care of God to us, wretched creatures; here is matter for wonder!

If we look to him that was a ſervant.

If we look to that in God, and him, that made him ſtoop to be a ſervant.

If we look to the manner of the performance of this ſervice.

If we look to the fruit of that ſervice, they are all matter of wonder.

If we look to the perſon that was this ſervant, the apoſtle in Phil. ii. will tell you, "he thought it not robbery to be equal "with God, yet he took upon him the form of a ſervant;" was not this wonderful for God to become man, the glorious God to abaſe himſelf to be a ſervant? God-man, glorious God, and baſe ſervant; for the living God to die; for the incomprehenſible God to be incloſed in the womb of a virgin; for glory itſelf to be abaſed, for riches to become poor; what matter of wonder is here? The very angels ſtand and gaze and wonder; they pry into theſe things. His name may well be called *Wonderful*.

There are four notable conjunctions that are eſpecially wonderful, two in us, and two above us.

One in us is, the conjunction of ſo excellent a thing as the ſoul breathed in by God; the ſoul of man is an admirable thing, the world is not worth it in the judgement of him that gave himſelf for it, that this ſhould be joined to a piece of earth. Indeed I am wonderfully made, ſaith David, in regard of his body, but the conjunction of the ſoul and body together, ſo excellent a ſubſtance, to ſo baſe a thing as earth, to a piece of red well coloured earth, to a lump of fleſh, it is a wondrous conjunction.

But there is a more ſupernatural conjunction of man, when all of us, ſinners as we are, are knit to Chriſt our head, and head and members make one Chriſt; here is a wonderful conjunction: St Paul calls it a myſtery, Epheſ. v. Theſe conjunctions in us are wonderful.

But now to go higher, in Chriſt there are more wonderful conjunctions; for the greateſt and the meaneſt to join together, for God and man to come together, the Lord of all, and a ſervant, and ſuch a ſervant as ſhould be under a curſe, for the higheſt of all to come to the deepeſt abaſement, for there was no abaſement ever ſo deep as Chriſt's was, in a double regard.

Firſt, none ever went ſo low as he, for he ſuffered the wrath of God, and bore upon him the ſins of us all, none ever was ſo low.

And then in another reſpect his abaſement was greateſt, becauſe he deſcended from the higheſt top of glory, and for him to be a man, to be a ſervant, to be a curſe, to ſuffer the wrath of

of God, to be the loweſt of all; Lord, whither doſt thou deſcend? here is a wonder in theſe conjunctions.

Next to Chriſt's abaſement was Adam's, becauſe he was the moſt excellent, being in the ſtate of innocence, and carrying the image of God, and being familiar with God, for him preſently to come into that fearful condition, it was the greateſt abaſement, becauſe it was from the greateſt dignity; that made the abaſement of Chriſt ſo great, for Lordſhip to ſubmit to ſervice, for God to be man, the bleſſed God to become a curſe, here is matter of wonder indeed.

In Chriſt again there was a conjunction of perfect body, perfect ſoul, and perfect God, and all make one Chriſt: in the Trinity there is a conjunction of three perſons in one nature, that is a wondrous conjunction, but it belongs not to our preſent purpoſe: here you ſee there is matter of wonder in the perſon, that Chriſt ſhould be a ſervant.

2. There is matter of wonder likewiſe, in that from whence he is a ſervant; whence comes it that Chriſt is a ſervant? It is from the wondrous love of God, and the wondrous love of Chriſt, to be ſo abaſed; it was wondrous love in God to give him to us to be ſo abaſed, and the wondrous miſery we were in, that we could not otherwiſe be freed from; for ſuch was the pride of man, that he being man would exalt himſelf to be like God. God became man, he became a ſervant to expiate our pride in Adam, ſo that it is wondrous in the ſpring of it. There was no ſuch love as Chriſt's to become a ſervant, there was no ſuch miſery as we were in, out of which we were delivered by this abaſement of Chriſt becoming a ſervant, ſo it is wondrous in that regard, ſpringing from the infinite love and mercy of God, which is greater in the work of redemption and reconciliation, than in the creation of the world, for the diſtance between nothing and ſomething was leſs than the diſtance between ſin and happineſs. For nothing adds no oppoſition, but to be in a ſinful ſtate there is oppoſition, therefore it was greater love and mercy for God, when we were ſinful, (and ſo obnoxious to eternal deſtruction) to make us of ſinners not only men, but to make us happy, to make us heirs of heaven out of a ſinful and curſed eſtate, than to make us of nothing ſomething, to make us men in Adam, for there God prevailed over nothing, but here his mercy triumphed over that which is oppoſite to God, our ſinfulneſs and curſedneſs. To ſhew that the creature cannot be ſo low, but there is ſomewhat in God

above the misery of the creature, his mercy shall triumph over the baseſt eſtate where he will ſhew mercy; therefore there is mercy above all mercy, and love above all love, in that Chriſt was a ſervant.

3. It is wondrous, in regard of the fruit we have by this ſervice of Chriſt, the work of our redemption, to be tranſlated from the kingdom of Satan, to the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, to be brought out of darkneſs into marvellous light, it is a marvellous matter of wonder, the good we have by this abaſement of Chriſt; behold what love the Father hath ſhewed us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God! Now all this comes from Chriſt's being a ſervant; our liberty comes from his ſervice and ſlavery, our life from his death, our adoption and ſonſhip and all comes from his abaſement, therefore it is a matter of wonder for the great things we have by it. O the depth, O the depth, ſaith St. Paul, here are all dimenſions in this excellent work that Chriſt hath wrought by his abaſement, by his incarnation, and taking upon him the form of a ſervant, and dying for us, here is "the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of God in Chriſt." O the riches of God's mercy, the apoſtles they ſtand in a wonder and admiration of this, and indeed if any thing be to be admired it is Chriſt, that wonderous conjunction, the wondrous love that wrought it, and the wondrous fruit we have by it.

It is the baſeneſs of our nature, we can wonder at ſhallow things, there cannot be a foolery but there will be many about it preſently, and ſtand admiring every empty idle thing, that the nature of man is carried away with, whereas indeed there is nothing worthy of admiration but the wonderful love of God. "O how wonderful are thy works?" ſaith David of the works of creation, Pſal. viii. the work of creation and of providence whereby God guides the world are wonderful, and the Pſalmiſt cries out of the folly of men, that do not regard the work of the Lord, Pſal. cvii. "Fools regard not this, the works of the Lord are worthy to be conſidered, they are known of all that delight in them," Pſal. cxi. but if theſe things be ſo wonderful, and to be regarded and delighted in, alas! what is all to the work of redemption? Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh, &c." theſe are myſteries, matters of admiration, but carnal men think theſe trivial matters, they can hear matters of more rarity, and when they ſpeak of theſe things, alas! they are too wiſe to wonder;—they know the goſpel well enough

enough, whereas indeed, as we ſee here, they are things that deſerve the admiration of angels, and as they deſerve it, ſo the angels pry into theſe excellent ſecrets in Jeſus Chriſt.

Chriſt was a ſervant by office and by condition; we muſt not reſt in this baſe condition: for he took upon him the form of a ſervant, that he might be an excellent ſervant; there is both baſeneſs and excellency in the word ſervant: for his humiliation was a degree of his exaltation, and a part of his advancement; if we regard his human nature, it was advancement from man's nature to be grafted into God by conception, and incarnation; but if we regard his god-head, for him to conceal himſelf, and lay aſide the beams and rays of majeſty, and clothe himſelf with man's fleſh, this was the firſt degree of humiliation, it was an advancement to his fleſh, but it was a concealing and hiding to his god-head, for God to become a ſervant, this was an abaſement: but then to conſider the excellency of the ſervice, how God delighteth in it, and how uſeful it was to us, and we ſhall ſee that he was a ſervant by way of excellency. There was firſt in Chriſt human fleſh, abaſed fleſh, and then glorious fleſh, abaſement was firſt neceſſary for Chriſt: for he could not have performed the office of a ſervant, unleſs he had undertaken the condition of a ſervant, he muſt firſt be abaſed and then glorious, our ill muſt be his, before his good could be ours, and how could he undergo our ill, our ſin and miſery, and the curſe due to us, but he muſt be abaſed? our ſins muſt be imputed to him, and then his righteouſneſs, and whatſoever is good is ours; ſo here is both the abaſement of his condition, and the excellency of his office, to be a King, Prieſt, and Prophet to his church, as we ſhall ſee afterward.

Uſe.—Is the Lord Chriſt a ſervant? this ſhould teach us not to ſtand upon terms. If Chriſt had ſtood upon terms, if he had refuſed to take upon him the ſhape of a ſervant, alas! where had we and our ſalvation been? and yet wretched creatures, we think ourſelves too good to do God and our brethren any ſervice. Chriſt ſtood not upon his greatneſs, but being equal with God he became a ſervant. Oh! we ſhould diſmount from the tower of our conceited excellency. The heart of man is a proud creature, a proud piece of fleſh, men ſtand upon their diſtance, what, ſhall I ſtoop to him? I am thus and thus; we ſhould deſcend from the heaven of our conceit, and take upon us the form of ſervants, and abaſe ourſelves to do good to others, even to any, and account it an honour to do any good to others in

in the places we are in. Chriſt did not think himſelf too good to leave heaven, to conceal and vail his majeſty under the vail of our fleſh, to work our redemption, to bring us out of the curſed eſtate we were in; ſhall we think ourſelves too good for any ſervice? Who for ſhame can be proud when he thinks of this, that God was abaſed; ſhall God be abaſed, and man proud? ſhall God become a ſervant, and ſhall we that are ſervants think much to ſerve our fellow ſervants? Let us learn this leſſon to abaſe ourſelves; we cannot have a better pattern to look unto than our bleſſed Saviour. A Chriſtian is the greateſt freeman in the world, he is free from the wrath of God, free from hell and damnation, from the curſe of the law; but then though he be free in theſe reſpects, yet in regard of love he is the greateſt ſervant, love abaſeth him to do all the good he can, and the more the ſpirit of Chriſt is in us, the more it will abaſe us to any thing wherein we can be ſerviceable.

Then again, here is comfort for us, that Chriſt, in whatſoever he did in our redemption, is God's ſervant; he is appointed by God to the work, ſo both God and Chriſt meet together in the work; Chriſt is voluntary in it, for he emptied himſelf, "he took upon him the form of a ſervant," he came from heaven voluntarily. And then withal the Father joins with him, the Father appointed him and ſent him, the Father laid him as the corner ſtone, the Father ſealed him, as it is, John vi. The Father ſet him out, as it is, Rom. iii. he hath ſet him out as the propitiation. Therefore when we think of reconciliation and redemption, and ſalvation wrought by Chriſt, let us comfort ourſelves in the ſolidity of the work, that it is a ſervice perfectly done, it was done by Chriſt, God-man, it is a ſervice accepted of God, therefore God cannot refuſe the ſervice of our ſalvation wrought by Chriſt. Chriſt was his ſervant in the working of it, we may preſent it to God, it is the obedience of thy ſervant, it is the ſatisfaction of thy ſervant: here is what will give full content and ſatisfaction to conſcience in this, that whatſoever Chriſt did, he was God's ſervant in it, but we ſhall better underſtand the intention of the Holy Ghoſt, when we have gone over the reſt of the words, "Behold my ſervant."

"Whom I have choſen."—Chriſt was choſen before all worlds, to be the head of the elect, he was predeſtinate and ordained by God. As we are ordained to ſalvation, ſo Chriſt is ordained to be the head of all that ſhall be ſaved, he was choſen eternally, and choſen in time, he was ſingled out to the work by God,

God, and all others that are choſen are choſen in him, there had been no chooſing of men but in him; for God ſaw us ſo defiled, lying in our filth, that he could not look upon us but in his Son, he choſe him, and us in him.

Here is meant not only chooſing by eternal election to happineſs, but a chooſing to office; there is a chooſing to grace and glory, and a chooſing to office. Here it is meant as well a chooſing to office, as to grace and glory. God, as he choſe Chriſt to grace and glory, ſo he choſe him to the office of Mediator. Chriſt did not chooſe himſelf, he was no uſurper, no man calls himſelf to the office, as it is in Hebrews, but Chriſt was called and appointed of God, he was willing indeed to the work, he took it voluntarily upon him, but as Mediator God choſe him, God the Father and he joining together.

If we reſpect eternal ſalvation or grace or office, Chriſt was choſen in reſpect of his manhood: for as it is well obſerved by divines, Chriſt is the head of all that are predeſtinate, and the human nature of Chriſt could not merit its choice, it could not merit its incarnation, it could not merit union with the Godhead, it was merely from grace. How could Chriſt's manhood deſerve any thing of God, before it was? Things muſt have a ſubſiſtence before they can work: our bleſſed Saviour is the pattern of all election, and his manhood could not merit to be knit to the ſecond perſon, as how could it, being a creature? Therefore the knitting of the human nature of Chriſt to his divine, it is called the grace of union; the chooſing of the human nature of Chriſt to be ſo gracious and glorious, it was of grace.

Chriſt, he was both a choſen ſervant, and a choice ſervant; in calling him a choſen ſervant, it implies his excellency, as a choſen veſſel, a choſen arrow in God's quiver, ſo a choſen ſervant, every way excellent.

This adds to our comfort, that whatſoever Chriſt did for us, he did it as choſen, he is a choſen ſtone, as St Peter ſaith, 1 Pet. ii. 6. "A precious corner ſtone, though refuſed of the builders, "yet precious in God's ſight."

Was Chriſt a choſen ſervant of God, and ſhall not we take God's choice? Is not God's choice the beſt and the wiſeſt? Hath God choſen Chriſt to work our ſalvation, and ſhall we chooſe any other? Shall we run to ſaints mediation, to the Virgin Mary and others for interceſſion, which is a part of Chriſt's office? Who choſe Mary, Peter and Paul to this work? there

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is no mention in ſcripture of them for this purpoſe, but " Be-" hold my ſervant, whom I have choſen."

God in paradiſe did chooſe a wife for Adam, ſo God hath choſen a huſband for his church, he hath choſen Chriſt for us, therefore it is intolerable ſacrilegious rebellion, and impudence to refuſe a Saviour, and Mediator of God's chooſing, and to ſet up others of our own, as if we were wiſer to chooſe for ourſelves than God is; we may content ourſelves well enough with God's choice, becauſe he is the party offended.

Beſides, it is folly to go out from Chriſt where there is all fullneſs and content, to leave God's choſen ſervant, and to go to any other ſervant, to any broken veſſel. God reſts in this ſervant, as Pharoah did in Joſeph, the ſecond perſon in the kingdom, therefore let God's choice and ours agree.

And this directs us alſo in our devotions to God, how to carry ourſelves in our prayers and ſervices, to offer Chriſt to God, " Behold, Lord, thy choſen ſervant, that thou haſt choſen to be my Mediator, my Saviour, my all in all to me, he is a Mediator and a Saviour of thine own chooſing, thou canſt not refuſe thy own choice; if thou look upon me, there is nothing but matter of unworthineſs, but look upon him whom thou haſt choſen, my head and Saviour."

Again, if Chriſt be a choſen ſervant, O let us take heed how we neglect Chriſt. When God hath choſen him for us, ſhall not we think him worthy to be embraced, and regarded? ſhall we not kiſs the Son with the kiſs of love, and faith, and ſubjection? He is a Saviour of God's own chooſing, refuſe him not. What is the reaſon that men refuſe this choſen ſtone? They will not be laid low enough to build upon this corner ſtone, this hidden ſtone; the excellency of Chriſt is hidden, it appears not to men, men will not be ſquared to be built upon him, ſtones for a building muſt be framed, and made even and flat; men ſtick out with this and that luſt, they will not be pared and cut and fitted for Chriſt; if they may have their luſts and wicked lives, they will admit of Chriſt, but we muſt make choice of him, as a ſtone to build upon, and to be built on him, we muſt be made like him. We like not this laying low and abaſing, therefore we refuſe this corner-ſtone, though God hath made him the corner of building to all thoſe that have the life of grace here, or ſhall have glory hereafter.

The Papiſts admit him to be a ſtone, but not the only ſtone

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to build on, but they build upon him and ſaints, upon him and works, upon him and traditions, but he is the only corner ſtone. God hath choſen him only, and we muſt chooſe him only, that we may be framed and laid upon him to make up one building. So much for that, "Behold my ſervant, whom I have choſen."

"My beloved in whom my ſoul is well-pleaſed."—How do we know that theſe words in the prophet Iſaiah are fitly applicable to Chriſt? By the greateſt authority that ever was from the beginning of the world, by the immediate voice of God the Father from heaven, who applies theſe words in Iſaiah to Chriſt, Matt. iii. in his inauguration, when he was baptized, "This is "my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed," this is my Son, ſo beloved that my ſoul delights in him, he is capable of my whole love, I may pour out my whole love upon him, "in "whom I am well pleaſed," it is the ſame with that here, "in "whom my ſoul delighteth," the one expreſſeth the other.

How, and in what reſpect is Chriſt thus beloved of God?

Firſt, as he is God, the Son of God, the engraven image of his Father, ſo he is *primum amabile*, the firſt lovely thing that ever was, when the Father loves him, he loves himſelf in him, ſo he loves him as God, as the ſecond perſon, as his own image and character.

And as man he loves him, for as man he was the moſt excellent creature in the world, he was conceived, faſhioned, and framed in his mother's womb by the Holy Ghoſt. It is ſaid, Heb. x. 5. God gave him a body, God the Father by the Holy Ghoſt faſhioned and framed, and fitted him with a body, therefore God muſt needs love his own workmanſhip.

Again, there was nothing in him diſpleaſing to God, there was no ſin found in his life any way, therefore as man he was well-pleaſing to God, he took the manhood, and ingrafted it into the ſecond perſon, and enriched it there, therefore he muſt needs love the manhood of Chriſt, being taken into ſo near a union with the Godhead.

As God and man Mediator eſpecially he loves and delights in him, in regard of his office, he muſt needs delight in his own ordinance and decree, now he decreed and ſealed him to that office, therefore he loves and delights in him as a Mediator of his own appointing and ordaining, to be our king, and prieſt, and prophet.

Again,

Again, he loved and delighted in him, in regard of the execution of his office, both in doing and ſuffering. In doing, the evangeliſt ſays, " he did all things well," when he healed the ſick, and raiſed the dead, and cured all diſeaſes; whatſoever he did was well done. And for his ſufferings, God delighted in him for that, as it is in John x. 17. " My Father loves me, be-
" cauſe I lay down my life," and ſo in Iſaiah liii. " He ſhall di-
" vide him a portion with the great, becauſe he poured out his
" ſoul unto death," and in Philip. ii. " Becauſe he abaſed him-
" ſelf to the death of the croſs, God gave him a name, above all
" names;" therefore God loves and delights in him for his ſuffering and abaſement.

It is ſaid of Noah, Gen. viii. 21. that he offered a ſacrifice after the flood, and the Lord ſmelled a ſweet ſavour of his ſacrifice, and thereupon he ſaith, " I will not curſe the earth again," ſo God loves and delights in Chriſt as he offered himſelf a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, wherein God reſts, he felt ſuch a ſweet ſavour in the ſacrifice of Chriſt, he is ſo delighted in it, that he will never deſtroy mankind, he will never deſtroy any that believe in Chriſt; the ſacrifice of Noah was a type of Chriſt's ſacrifice.

Now that Chriſt's ſacrifice was ſo acceptable to God, there is a direct place for it in Epheſ. v. " Walk in love, as Chriſt hath
" loved us, and hath given himſelf an offering and a ſacrifice to
" God of a ſweet ſmell." And indeed how many ſweet ſavours were there in the ſacrifice of Chriſt offered on the croſs? Was there not the ſweet ſavour of obedience? He was obedient to the death of the croſs; there was the ſweet ſavour of patience, and of love to mankind, therefore God delighteth in him, as God, as man, as Mediator, God-man, in his doings, in his ſufferings, every way.

Doth God delight thus in Chriſt, in his perſon, or conſidered myſtically? I anſwer, both, God loves and delights in Chriſt myſtical, that is, in Chriſt and his members, in whole Chriſt. " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed," not only with whom alone by himſelf, but in whom, in him as God, in him in body and ſoul, in him as head of the church, in him myſtically, in all that are under him in any kind of way, God delights in him, and all his.

Is it poſſible that he ſhould delight in the head, and refuſe the members? That he ſhould love the huſband, and miſlike the ſpouſe?

ſpouſe? O no; with the ſame love that God loves Chriſt, he loves all his, he delights in Chriſt and all his, with the ſame delight; there is ſome difference in the degree, "That Chriſt in all "things may have the pre-eminence," but it is the ſame love; therefore our Saviour ſets it down excellently in his own prayer, he deſires that the ſame love wherewith his Father loved him may be in them that are his, that they may feel the love wherewith his Father loves him: for he loves him and his members, him and his ſpouſe with all one love.

This is our comfort and our confidence, that God accepts us, becauſe he accepts his beloved, and when he ſhall ceaſe to love Chriſt, he ſhall ceaſe to love the members of Chriſt, they and Chriſt make one myſtical Chriſt. This is our comfort in dejection for ſin, we are ſo and ſo indeed, but Chriſt is the choſen ſervant of God, in whom he delighteth, and delights in us in him; it is no matter what we are in ourſelves, but what we are in Chriſt, when we are once in him and continue in him, God loves us with that inſeparable love wherewith he loves his own Son, therefore St Paul triumphs, Rom. viii. "Who ſhall ſe-"parate us from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus?" This love is founded in Chriſt, "therefore neither things preſent, nor "things to come," as he goes on there gloriouſly, "ſhall be "able to ſeparate us," you ſee what a wondrous confidence and comfort we have hence, if we labour to be in Chriſt, that then God loves and delights in us, becauſe he loves and delights in Chriſt Jeſus.

And here is a wondrous comfort, that God muſt needs love our ſalvation and redemption, when he loves Chriſt becauſe he poured out his ſoul to death to ſave us. Doth not God delight that we ſhould be ſaved, and our ſins forgiven, when he loves Chriſt becauſe he abaſed himſelf for that purpoſe? What a prop and foundation of comfort is this, when the devil ſhall preſent God to us in a terrible hideous manner, as an avenging God, and conſuming fire, &c. (indeed out of Chriſt he is ſo) let us preſent to ourſelves thoughts of God, as the ſcripture ſets forth God to us, and as God ſets forth himſelf, not only in that ſweet relation as a Father to Chriſt, but our Father, "I go to my Father and your "Father, to my God and your God," having both one God, and love and care. There is none of us but the devil will have a ſaying to us, either in the time of our life, in ſome terrible temptation, eſpecially when any outward abaſement comes, or at the hour of death, and all the cordials we have gathered out of the word

word will then be little enough to ſupport the drooping ſoul, eſpecially in the hour of temptation. O beloved! what a wondrous ſtay, and ſatisfaction to a diſtreſſed conſcience does this yield, that Chriſt in all that he hath wrought for us, is God's choſen ſervant, whom he loves and delights in, and delights in him for this very work, that he abaſed himſelf and gave himſelf for us, that he wrought God's work, becauſe he wrought reconciliation for us? If we can believe in Chriſt, we ſee here what ground of comfort we have, that God loves and delights in us, as he doth in his own Son.

And what a comfort is it now, in our daily approach to God, to miniſter boldneſs to us in all our ſuits, that we go to God in the name of one that he loves, in whom his ſoul delights, that we have a friend in court, a friend in heaven for us, who is at the right hand of God, and interpoſeth himſelf there for us, in all our ſuits, who makes us acceptable, who perfumes our prayers and makes them acceptable, his interceſſion is ſtill by virtue of his ſervice; dying for us, he interceeds by virtue of his redemption; if God love him for the work of redemption, he loves him for his interceſſion, therefore God muſt needs regard the prayers made by him, by virtue of his dying for us, when he loves him for dying for us. Be ſure, therefore, in all our ſuits to God, to take our beloved brother, take Benjamin with us, offer all to God in him, our perſons to be accepted in him, our prayers, our hearing, our works, and all that we do, and we ſhall be ſure to ſpeed: for he is one in whom the ſoul of God delights. There muſt be this paſſage and repaſſage, as God looks upon us lovely in him and delights in us, as we are members of him, all God's love, and the fruits of it come to us as we are in Chriſt, and are one with him, then in our paſſage to God again, we muſt return all, and do all to God in Chriſt, be ſure not to go to a naked God, for ſo he is a conſuming fire, but go to him in the mediation of him whom he loves, and in whom his ſoul delighteth.

And ſhall God love him, and delight in him, and ſhall not our ſouls delight in Chriſt? This therefore ſhould ſtir up our affections to Chriſt, to be faithful in our conjugal affection as the ſpouſe of Chriſt, to ſay, "My beloved is mine, and I am my beloved's." Chriſt calls his church, "My love and my dove." Doth Chriſt delight in us, and God delight in Chriſt, and ſhall not we delight in Chriſt, that delights in us, and in whom God delights? In 1 Cor. xvi. uit. the apoſtle is bold to pronounce a bitter curſe, Anathema Maranatha, upon him that loves not the

the Lord Chriſt Jeſus, a moſt bitter curſe, when Chriſt ſhall become a ſervant to do our work for us, to ſuffer for us, to bear the burthen of our ſins upon the tree, to become our huſband, to beſtow his riches upon us, to raiſe us to the ſame condition with himſelf, and withal to be ſuch a one as God hath choſen out to love, and delight in, as the beſt object of his love, and moſt capable of it, and for us not to ſolace and delight ourſelves in him that God delights in, when God delights in him for our ſake? God loves and delights in him for the work of ſalvation and redemption by his blood, and ſhall not we love and embrace him for his love, which is for our good? What good hath God by it, but only the glory of his mercy, in ſaving our ſouls through Chriſt? Therefore, if God love him for the good he doth to us, much more ſhould we love him for the fruit of it that we receive ourſelves.

It ſhould ſhame us therefore, when we find dullneſs, and coldneſs upon us, that we can hear of any thing better than of Chriſt, and arguments concerning Chriſt are cold to us, alas! where is our love, and joy, and delight? and when we can make no better but a carnal uſe of the incarnation and other benefits by Chriſt, we ſhould therefore deſire God to ſhed the love of Chriſt into our hearts more and more, that we may feel in our ſouls the love that he bears to us, and may love God and Chriſt again, for what he hath done for us.

Hence we have alſo a ground of eſtimation of Chriſtians to be excellent perſons. Doth God value poor ſinful ſouls ſo much as to give Chriſt for them to become a Saviour, doth he delight in Chriſt for giving himſelf for them, and ſhall not we love one another, whom God and Chriſt ſo loves?

Queſt.—But if God love and delight in thoſe that are in Chriſt, with the ſame love and delight that he hath in him, how ſhall I know that I am in Chriſt, and that God thus delights in me?

1. Briefly, a man may know that he is in Chriſt, if he find the ſpirit of Chriſt in him, for the ſame ſpirit (when Chriſt took our nature) that ſanctified that bleſſed maſs, whereof he was made, when there was an union between him and the ſecond perſon, the ſame ſpirit ſanctifies our ſouls and bodies; there is one ſpirit in the head and in the members; therefore if we find the ſpirit of Chriſt in us, we are in Chriſt, and he in us. Now this ſpirit is renewing, "whoſoever is in Chriſt is a new creature," all is new, "old things are done away," the old manner

of language, the old diſpoſition, old affections, old company, all old things are paſt, all is new, and if a man be a new creature, he hath right and title to "the new heaven and new earth." Let us examine the work of grace in us; if there be no change in us, we have no preſent intereſt in Chriſt, we have to do with him becauſe he is ſtill wooing us to be in him, but as yet we have no title to him.

The very beholding of Chriſt is a transforming ſight, the Spirit that makes us new creatures, and ſtirs us up to behold this ſervant, it is a transforming beholding, if we look upon him with the eye of faith, it will make us like Chriſt; for the goſpel is a mirror, and ſuch a mirror, that when we look into it, and ſee ourſelves intereſted in it, we are changed from glory to glory; a man cannot look upon the love of God and of Chriſt in the goſpel, but it will change him to be like God, and Chriſt: for how can we ſee Chriſt, and God in Chriſt, but we ſhall ſee how God hates ſin, and this will transform us to hate it as God doth, who hated it ſo, that it could not be expiated but with the blood of Chriſt God-man, ſo ſeeing the holineſs of God in it, it will transform us to be holy; when we ſee the love of God in the goſpel, and the love of Chriſt giving himſelf for us, this will transform us to love God; when we ſee the humility and obedience of Chriſt, when we look on Chriſt as God's choſen ſervant in all this, and as our ſurety and head, it transforms us to the like humility and obedience. Thoſe that find not their diſpoſitions in ſome comfortable meaſure, wrought to this bleſſed transformation, they have not yet thoſe eyes that the Holy Ghoſt requireth here, "Behold my ſervant, whom I have choſen, my beloved, in "whom my ſoul delighteth."

"I will put my Spirit upon him."—Now we come to the qualification of Chriſt for his calling, in theſe words, "I will "put my Spirit upon him," that is, I will clothe him with my Spirit, I will put it, as it were, upon him as a garment.

Now there were divers degrees of Chriſt's receiving the Spirit at ſeveral times: for he was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, the Holy Ghoſt did ſanctify that bleſſed maſs whereof his body was framed in the womb of the virgin, he was quickened in the womb in his conception by the Holy Ghoſt, and he was graced by the Holy Ghoſt, and led by the Spirit in all things before his baptiſm, but afterwards when he came to ſet upon his office, to be the prophet, and prieſt, and king of his church, that great office of ſaving mankind, which he did not ſolemnly ſet upon till he was

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thirty years old, then God poured upon him a ſpecial portion of the Spirit, anſwerable to that great calling, then the Spirit lighted upon him. Chriſt was ordained to his office by the greateſt authority that ever any was ordained from the beginning of the world; for at his baptiſm, when he was ordained and ſet apart to his office, there was the Father from heaven uttering in an audible voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed," and there was Chriſt, the party baptized and inſtalled into that great office; then there was the Holy Ghoſt, in the form and ſhape of a dove, it being a matter of the greateſt conſequence that ever was in the world, greater than the creation; it was fit it ſhould be done with the greateſt authority, and ſo it was, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, being preſent at the admiſſion of Chriſt into his office; this is eſpecially here intended, though the other be included. "I will put my Spirit upon him," that is, I will anoint him, as it is in Iſaiah lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the "Lord is upon me, (ſaith Chriſt) becauſe the Lord hath anoint-"ed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the bro-"ken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the "priſon for them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year "of the Lord," that is, the year of Jubilee, for that was a type of Chriſt, to preach the goſpel, deliverance to all that are in captivity, ſervitude, and thraldom, under Satan and ſin; this was accompliſhed when Chriſt at his baptiſm entered upon his office. God put his Spirit upon him, to ſet him apart, to ordain him, and to qualify him with abundance of grace for the work; for there are theſe three things eſpecially meant by putting the Spirit upon him, ſeparation, or ſetting apart, and ordaining and enriching with the gifts of the Spirit.

When any one is called to a great place, there is a ſetting apart from others, and an ordaining to that particular, and a qualifying; if it be a calling of God, he qualifies where he ordains always.

But Chriſt had the Spirit before; what doth he mean, then, when he ſaith, he will put the Spirit upon him now?

I anſwer: He had the Spirit before anſwerable to that condition he was in, now he received the Spirit anſwerable to that condition he was to undertake; he was perfect, then, for that condition; now he was to be made perfect for that office he was to ſet upon; he was always perfect, he had abundance of ſpirit for that eſtate he was in, but now he was to enter upon another

condition, to preach the gospel, to be a prophet, and after to be a priest, therefore, he saith, now especially, "I will put my Spirit upon him."

Now, this putting of the Spirit is expressed in Isaiah lxi. and other places, by anointing. There were three sorts of persons that were anointed before Christ, prophets, priests, and kings; now Christ was to be a prophet, a priest, and a king, therefore he was to be anointed with the Spirit, to enable him to these three offices.

I might here take occasion to enlarge myself in the offices of Christ, but I will only speak of them as the text ministreth just occasion.

There are three main defects in man since the fall.

There is ignorance and blindness.

There is rebellion in the will and affections.

And in regard of his condition, by reason of the sins of nature and life, a subjection to a cursed state, to the wrath of God, and eternal damnation.

Now, answerable to these three grand ills, whosoever shall be ordained a Saviour, must provide proportionable remedies for these; hereupon comes a threefold office in Christ, who is ordained to save man, to cure this threefold mischief and malady.

As we are ignorant and blind, he is a prophet to instruct us, to convince us of the ill state we are in, and then to convince us of the good he intends us, and hath wrought for us; to instruct us in all things concerning our everlasting comfort: he is such a prophet, as teacheth not only the outward, but the inward man; he openeth the heart, he teacheth to do the things he teacheth; men teach what we should do, but they teach not the doing of them: he is such a prophet, as teacheth us the very things he teacheth us, to love and to obey, &c.

And, answerable to the rebellion and sinfulness of our dispositions, he is a King to subdue whatsoever is ill in us, and likewise to subdue all opposite power without us; by little and little he will trample all enemies under his feet, and under our feet too, ere long.

Now, as we are cursed by reason of our sinful condition, so he is a Priest, to satisfy the wrath of God for us; he was made a curse

curſe for us, he became a ſervant, that being ſo he might die, and undergo the curſed death of the croſs; not only death, but a curſed death, and ſo his blood might be an atonement as a Prieſt. So, anſwerable to the threefold ill in us, you ſee here is a threefold office in Chriſt.

Now Chriſt performs theſe three offices in this order:

Firſt of all, he is a Prophet; when he was baptized, the Spirit was put upon him, as in Iſaiah lxi. "To preach deliverance to the captives." Firſt, he preached wherefore he came into the world, why God ſent him, and diſcovered to the world the ſtate they were in; and when he had preached as a Prophet, then as a Prieſt he died, and offered himſelf a ſacrifice.

After death, his kingly office was moſt apparent, for then he roſe again as a triumphant King over death and all our enemies, and aſcended in his triumphant chariot to heaven, and there he ſits glorioufly, as a King on his throne, at the right hand of God; ſo that, although at his baptiſm, and before, when he was ſanctified in his mother's womb, he was both King, Prieſt, and Prophet, yet in regard of the order of manifeſtation, he manifeſted himſelf, firſt, to be a Prophet, ſecondly, a Prieſt, and thirdly, to be a King; for his kingly office broke forth but ſeldom in the time of his abaſement; ſometimes it did, to ſhew that he was ruler and commander of earth, and ſea, and devils, and all: he wrought miracles; but the glorious manifeſtation of his kingly office was after his reſurrection.

Now the fundamental, the chief office to which he was anointed by the Spirit, (upon which the reſt depends) was his prieſtly office; for why was his teaching, but to inſtruct us what he muſt do and ſuffer for us, and what benefit we have by his ſacrifice; reconciliation with God, and freedom from the wrath of God, and right unto life everlaſting, by his obedience to the curſed death of the croſs. And how comes he to be a King, to rule over us by his holy Spirit, and to have a right unto us? But becauſe as a Prieſt, he died for us firſt. "He waſhed us with his blood, he purged us with his blood, and then he made us Kings and Prieſts," Rev. i. All other benefits came from this, he waſhed our ſouls in his blood firſt; whatſoever we have from God, is eſpecially from the great work of Chriſt, as a Prieſt abaſing himſelf, and dying for us, and thereupon he comes to be a Prophet and a King. Thus we ſee the order of Chriſt's offi-

ces, how they come to be fruitful to us, the reſt eſpecially, by virtue of his prieſtly office.

Note this by the way. Chriſt's prieſtly office includes two branches; his ſacrificing himſelf for us, a prieſt was to offer ſacrifice, and to pray for the people; our Saviour Chriſt did both in the days of his humiliation; in his prayer in John xvii. there, as a Prieſt, he commends his ſacrifice to God before he died, and now he is in heaven, making interceſſion for us to the end of the world; he appears for us there. We ſee, then, to what purpoſe God put the Spirit upon Chriſt, to enable him to be a Prophet, a Prieſt, and a King, and thereupon to take away thoſe miſchiefs and evils that we were ſubject and enthralled to, ſo that we have a ſupply for all that may any way abaſe us and caſt us down, in the all-ſufficiency that is in Chriſt Jeſus, who was anointed with the Spirit for this end.

Object. It may be objected, Chriſt was God himſelf; he had the Spirit, and gives the Spirit, therefore how could the Spirit be put upon him?

Anſw. I anſwer; Chriſt is both God and man; Chriſt, as God, gives the Spirit to his human nature, ſo he communicates his Spirit; the Spirit is his Spirit, as well as the Father's—the Spirit proceeds from them both. Chriſt as man receives the Spirit, God the Father and the Son put the Spirit upon the manhood of Chriſt; ſo Chriſt both gives and receives the Spirit in divers reſpects; as God, he gives and ſends the Spirit, the inſpiration and breathing of the Spirit is from him as well as from the Father; but, as man, he received the Spirit.

And this is the reaſon of it: next under the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, Chriſt the mediator was to be the ſpring and original of all comfort and good; therefore Chriſt's nature muſt not only be ſanctified and ordained by the Spirit, but he muſt receive the Spirit to enrich it, for whatſoever is wrought by the creature, is by the Spirit—whatſoever Chriſt did as man, he did by the Spirit. Chriſt's human nature, therefore, muſt be ſanctified, and have the Spirit put upon it. God the Father, the firſt perſon in Trinity, and God the Son, the ſecond, they work not immediately, but by the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon; therefore whatſoever is wrought upon the creature, it comes from the Holy Ghoſt immediately; ſo Chriſt received the Holy Ghoſt, as ſent from the Father and the Son. Now as the Holy Spirit is

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from the Father and the Son, ſo he works from the Father and the Son, he ſanctifieth and purifieth, and doth all from the Father and the Son, and knits us to the Father and the Son; to the Son firſt, and then to the Father, therefore it is ſaid, "The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt;" becauſe all the communion we have with God is by the Holy Ghoſt, all the communion that Chriſt as man had with God, was by the Holy Ghoſt, and all the communion that God hath with us, and we with God, is by the Holy Ghoſt, for the Spirit is the bond of union between Chriſt and us, and between God and us. God communicates himſelf to us by his Spirit, and we communicate with God by his Spirit. God doth all in us by his Spirit, and we do all back again to God by the Spirit. Becauſe Chriſt as a head, as the ſecond Adam, was to be the root of all that are ſaved, (as the firſt Adam was the root of all that are damned) he was, therefore, to receive the Spirit, and to have it put upon him in a more excellent and rich manner, for we muſt know that all things are firſt in Chriſt, and then in us.

God choſe him firſt, and then he choſe us.

God ſingled him out to be the Saviour, the ſecond Adam, and he calls us in Chriſt.

God juſtified Chriſt from our ſins, being our ſurety, taking our ſins upon him; we are juſtified, becauſe he by his reſurrection quitted himſelf from the guilt of our ſins, as having paid the debt.

Chriſt is the firſt fruits of them that riſe again; we riſe again, becauſe he is riſen.

Chriſt firſt aſcended; we aſcend in Chriſt.

Chriſt is firſt loved; we are loved in the Beloved.

Chriſt is firſt bleſſed; "we are bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings "in Jeſus Chriſt." So whatſoever is in us, we have it at the ſecond hand; we have the Spirit in us, but he is firſt in Chriſt. God hath put the Spirit in Chriſt, as the ſpring, as the ſecond Adam, as a public perſon, that ſhould receive the Spirit for us all; he is firſt in all things; Chriſt muſt have the pre-eminence; he hath the pre-eminence in all, both before time, in time, and after time, in election, in whatſoever is done here

in this world, and in glorification; all is firſt in Chriſt, and then in us; he is the elder brother.

We muſt underſtand this, to give Chriſt his due honour and reſpect, and to know whence we have all we have. Therefore the Spirit is ſaid here firſt, to be put upon Chriſt. We have not the Holy Ghoſt immediately from God, but we have him as ſanctifying Chriſt firſt, and then us, and whatſoever the Holy Ghoſt doth in us, he doth the ſame in Chriſt firſt, and he doth it in us, becauſe in Chriſt. Therefore in John xiv. Chriſt ſaith, "He "ſhall take of mine," whatſoever the Holy Ghoſt works in us, he takes of Chriſt firſt.

How is that? Thus: the Holy Ghoſt comforts us with reaſons from Chriſt; he died, and hath reconciled us to God, therefore now God is at peace with thee. Here the Holy Ghoſt takes a ground of comfort from the death of Chriſt. When the Holy Ghoſt would raiſe a man up to holineſs of life, he tells him, "Chriſt thy Saviour and Head is quickened, and is now in hea-"ven," therefore we ought to riſe to holineſs of life. If the Holy Ghoſt be to work either comfort or grace, or any thing, he not only doth the ſame thing that he did firſt in Chriſt, but he doth it in us by reaſons from Chriſt, by grounds fetched from Chriſt; the Holy Ghoſt tells our ſouls that God loves Chriſt firſt, and he loves us in Chriſt, and that we are thoſe that God gave Chriſt for; that we are thoſe that Chriſt makes interceſſion for in heaven, the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth to us the love of the Father and the Son, and ſo he fetcheth from Chriſt whatſoever he works.

And hence the works of the Holy Ghoſt are diſtinguiſhed from illuſions and deluſions, that are nothing but frantic conceits of comfort that are groundleſs. The Holy Ghoſt fetcheth all from Chriſt, in his working and comfort, and he makes Chriſt the pattern of all, for whatſoever is in Chriſt, the Holy Ghoſt (which is the Spirit of Chriſt) works in us, as it is in Chriſt. Therefore in John i. 13. it is ſaid, "Of his fulneſs we receive "grace for grace," that is, grace anſwerable to his grace. There are three things that we receive anſwerable to Chriſt by the Spirit.

We receive grace, that is, the favour of God, anſwerable to the favour od ſhews his on; he loves his Son, he is graciouſly diſpoſed to him, and he loves us.

So

So grace habitual: we have grace in us anſwerable to the grace in Chriſt; we have love anſwerable to his love, patience anſwerable to his patience, obedience and humility anſwerable to that in Chriſt; the Spirit works a conformity to Chriſt in all things.

Likewiſe in the third place, the Spirit aſſures us of the ſame privileges that iſſue from grace: Chriſt is a ſon, the Spirit tells us we are ſons; Chriſt is an heir, the Spirit tells us we are heirs with Chriſt; Chriſt is the King of heaven and earth, the Spirit tells us that we are kings, that his riches are ours. Thus we have grace for grace, both favour and grace in us, and privileges iſſuing from grace; we have all as they are in Chriſt. Even as in the firſt Adam we receive of his emptineſs, curſe for curſe, ill for ill, for his blindneſs and rebellion we are anſwerable, we are born as he was after his fall; ſo in the ſecond Adam, by his Spirit, we receive grace for grace.

Hence iſſues this, that our ſtate now in Chriſt, is far more excellent than our ſtate in Adam was.

Queſt. How doth it ſpring hence?

Anſw. Thus:—Chriſt is God-Man, his nature was ſanctified by the Spirit, he was a more excellent perſon, he gives and ſends the Spirit; Adam was only a mere man, and therefore his goodneſs could not be ſo derived to his poſterity, for however the Holy Ghoſt was in Adam, yet the Holy Ghoſt did not ſo fill him; he was not ſo in him as in Chriſt The Holy Ghoſt is in Chriſt in a more excellent manner, for Chriſt being equal with God, he gave the Holy Ghoſt; the Holy Ghoſt comes from Chriſt as God; now the ſecond Adam being a more excellent perſon, we being in Chriſt the ſecond Adam, we are in a more excellent, and in a more ſafe ſtate, we have a better keeper of our happineſs than Adam; he being a mere man, he could not keep his own happineſs, but loſt himſelf and all his poſterity; though he was created after the image of God, yet being but a mere man, he ſhewed himſelf to be a man, that is, a changeable creature: but Chriſt being God and man, having his nature ſanctified by the Spirit, now our happineſs is in a better keeping, for our grace hath a better ſpring; the grace and ſanctification we have, it is not in our own keeping, it diſtills into us anſwerable to our neceſſities; but the ſpring is indeficient, it never fails—the ſpring is in Chriſt. So the favour that God bears us, it

it is not firſt in us, but it is firſt in Chriſt; God loves him, and then he loves us, he gives him the Spirit, and us in him. Now Chriſt is the keeper both of the love of God towards us, and the grace of God, and whatſoever is good; he keeps all for us, he receives all for himſelf and for us; he receives not only the Spirit for himſelf, but he receives it as mediator, as head, "for we "all of his fullneſs receive grace for grace," he receives it as a fountain, to diffuſe it. I ſay, this ſhews our happy and bleſſed condition in Jeſus Chriſt, that now the grace and love of God and our happineſs, and the grace whereby we are ſanctified and fitted for it, is not in our own keeping originally, but in our head Chriſt Jeſus.

Theſe are comfortable conſiderations; and, indeed, are the life and ſoul of a Chriſtian's life and comfort; if we conceive them aright, they will quicken us to obedience, and we ſhall know what the goſpel is. To come to make ſome uſe of it,

I might obſerve this, that none ſhould take that office upon them, to which they are not called of God, nor qualified by his Spirit, eſpecially miniſters, becauſe Chriſt did not ſet upon his office, till the Spirit was put upon him. The Spirit muſt enable us, and fit us for every thing. But I leave this, and come to that which concerns us all.

Firſt, then, hath God put the Spirit upon Chriſt, as the Evangeliſt ſaith in John iii. 34. "He whom God hath ſent," that is Chriſt, "he ſpeaketh the word of God: for God gives him not "the Spirit by meaſure." God doth not ſtand meaſuring grace out to Chriſt, but he pours out upon him full meaſure, running over, becauſe he receives it not for himſelf alone, but for us; we receive the Spirit by meaſure; Eph. iv. 7. "According to the "meaſure of the gift of Chriſt"—Chriſt gives us all a meaſure of ſanctifying knowledge, and of every grace, "till we grow to be "a perfect man in Chriſt." Therefore it is called the "firſt "fruits of the Spirit," as much as ſhall fit us for heaven, and grace ſufficient, though it be not that meaſure we ſhall have hereafter, or what we would have here. Chriſt had a full meaſure, the fulneſs of a fountain, diffuſing not only abundance for himſelf, but redundance, and overflowing for the good of others; he being the head of the church, not only a head of eminence, but of influence, to beſtow and convey all grace in him to all his members, proportionable to the ſervice of every member, therefore he received not the Spirit according to meaſure,

ſure, that is, ſparingly, but it was ſhowered upon him, he was was filled and clothed with the Holy Ghoſt. Is it ſo?

Uſe. Let us labour, then, to ſee where to have ſupply in all our wants—we have a full treaſury to go to—all treaſure is hid in Chriſt for us: What a comfort is this in any thing we want? If we want the favour of God, go to his beloved Chriſt, deſire God to love us in his Beloved, and to accept us in his gracious Son, in him whom he hath made his ſervant, and anointed him with his Spirit for that purpoſe.

If we want particular graces, go to the well-head, Chriſt; conſider of Chriſt, now filled for us as it was in Aaron, the oil that was poured on Aaron's head, ran down to his beard, and to the ſkirts of his cloathing, the meaneſt parts of his garment was bedewed with that oil; ſo the graces of God's ſpirit poured upon our head Chriſt, our Aaron, our High Prieſt, run down upon us, upon all ranks of Chriſtians, even upon the ſkirts, the weakeſt and the loweſt Chriſtians, every one hath grace for grace; we all partake of the oil and anointing of our ſpiritual Aaron, our High Prieſt. If we want any thing, therefore, let us go to him; "I can do all (ſaith St Paul) in Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me." —Go to him for patience, for comfort, for every thing, becauſe God hath put his Spirit upon him, to ſupply all our wants; he hath the oil of gladneſs above his fellows, but for his fellows, Pſ. xlv. he hath the oil of grace more than any, but it is not only for him, but for us all. Therefore let us have comfortable meditations of the fulneſs of Chriſt, and make uſe of it; all this is for me. In Col. ii. St. Paul ſets it out, "in him the fulneſs of "the Godhead dwells perſonally," and it follows after, "in him "we are complete." Wherefore is all the fulneſs that is in him? To ſhew that in him we are complete. So in 1 John v. 20. to ſhew how the ſpirits of the apoſtles agree, "In this," ſaith he, "we know that the Son of God is come in the fleſh, "and hath given us an underſtanding to know him that is true, "and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt: "This is the true God and eternal life." Chriſt is true God and eternal life for us all: for our comfort, "We know that the Son "of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding," &c. "Little children, keep yourſelves from idols." How doth this depend upon the other? Thus; will you go to idols, ſtocks, and ſtones, devices of mens brain, for ſupply of grace and comfort? Chriſt, whom God hath ſent here, he is come into the world, he

he is the true God and eternal life; God hath given eternal life, and this life is in his Son, therefore why ſhould you go to idols?

What is the ground of Popiſh idolatries and abominations?—They conceive not aright of the fulneſs of Chriſt, wherefore he was ordained and ſent of God; for if they did, they would not go to idols and ſaints, and leave Chriſt. Therefore let us make this uſe of it, go out of Chriſt for nothing. If we want favour, go not to ſaints; if we want inſtruction, go not to traditions of men; he is a Prophet wiſe enough, and a Prieſt full enough to make us accepted of God; ifwe want any grace, he is a King able enough, rich enough, and ſtrong enough to ſubdue all our rebellions in us, and he will in time, by his Spirit, overcome all; "Stronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world."—The ſpirit in the world, the devil, and deviliſh-minded men, they are not ſo ſtrong as the Spirit of Chriſt; for by little and little the Spirit of Chriſt will ſubdue all. Chriſt is a King; go not out of him, therefore, for any thing. "Babes, keep yourſelves from idols;" you may well enough—you know whom to go to.

Therefore let us ſhame ourſelves: Is there ſuch a ſtore-houſe of comfort and grace every way in Chriſt? Why are we ſo weak and comfortleſs? Why are we ſo dejected, as if we had not ſuch a rich huſband? All our huſband's riches are ours for our good—we receive of it in our meaſure, why do we not go to the fountain, and make uſe of it? Why, in the midſt of abundance, are we poor and beggarly?—Here we may ſee the miſery of the world: Chriſt is a Prophet, to teach us the way to heaven, but how few there be that will be directed by him! Chriſt is a King, to ſubdue all our ſpiritual and worſt enemies, to ſubdue thoſe enemies that kings tremble at, to ſubdue death, to ſubdue the fear of judgment, and the wrath of God, and yet how few will come under his government! Chriſt is the light of the world, yet how few follow him! Chriſt is the way, yet how few tread in his ſteps! Chriſt is our wiſdom and our riches, yet how few go to him to fetch any riches, but content themſelves with the tranſitory things of this life!—Men live as if Chriſt were nothing, or did nothing concerning them; as if he were a perſon abſtracted from them; as if he were not a head or huſband; as if he had received the Spirit only for himſelf, and not for them; whereas all that is in Chriſt is for us. I beſeech you, therefore, let us learn to know Chriſt better, and to make uſe of him.

Again, if Chriſt hath the Spirit put upon him for us all, then in

in our daily ſlips and errors make this uſe, to offer Chriſt to God with this argument, take an argument from God himſelf to bind him; God will be bound with his own arguments, we cannot bind him with ours, but let us go to him and ſay, 'Lord, though 'I be thus and thus ſinful, yet for Chriſt Jeſus' ſake thy ſervant, 'whom thou loveſt, and haſt put thy Spirit upon him to be a 'prieſt, and to make interceſſion for me, for his ſake pardon, for 'his ſake accept.' Make uſe of God's conſecration of Chriſt by the Spirit, to God himſelf, and bind him with his own Mediator, and with his own Prieſt of his own ordaining; thou canſt not, Lord, refuſe a Saviour and Mediator of thine own, ſanctified by thine own Spirit, whom thou haſt ſet apart, and ordained and qualified every way for this purpoſe. Let us go to God in the name of this Mediator Jeſus Chriſt every day; and this is to make a good uſe of this, That God hath put his Spirit upon him.

But to make a uſe of trial: How ſhall we know that this comfort belongs to us, that Chriſt hath the Spirit put upon him for us or not—whether he be ordained a King, Prieſt, and Prophet for us? That which I ſaid before will give light to this; we muſt partake of the ſame Spirit that Chriſt hath, or elſe we are none of his members; as we partake of his name, ſo we muſt alſo of his anointing: thereupon we are called Chriſtians, becauſe we partake of the anointing and Spirit of Chriſt; and if we have the Spirit of Chriſt, it will work the ſame in us as it did in Chriſt, it will convince us of our own ill, of our rebellions, and curſed eſtate, and it will convince us, likewiſe, of the good we have in him. And then, he is a Spirit of union, to knit us to Chriſt, and make us one with him, and thereupon to quicken us, to lead us, and guide us, and to dwell in us continually; to ſtir up prayers and ſupplications in us, to make us cry familiarly to God, as to a Father, to comfort and ſupport us in all our wants and miſeries, as he did Chriſt, "to help our infirmities," as the apoſtle at large, in Rom. viii. ſets down the excellent office of the Holy Ghoſt, what he doth in thoſe that are Chriſt's.

Let us, therefore, examine ourſelves, what the Spirit doth in us, if Chriſt be ſet apart to redeem us, as a Prieſt. Surely all his offices go together—he doth by the ſame Spirit rule us; Rev. i. "He hath waſhed us in his blood, and made us kings and "prieſts." Whomſoever he waſheth in his blood, he maketh him a king and a prieſt—he makes him, by the power of his Spirit,

able

able to rule over his baſe corruptions. We may know, then, whether we have benefit by Chriſt, by his Spirit, not only by the Spirit witneſſing that we are the ſons of God, but by ſome arguments whereby the Spirit may witneſs without deluſion, for, though the Spirit of Chriſt tells us that we are Chriſt's, yet the proof muſt be from guiding, and leading, and comforting, and conforming us to Jeſus Chriſt, in making us kings and prophets, enlightening our underſtandings to know his will, and conforming us to be like him. The Spirit of Chriſt is a Spirit of power and ſtrength, it will enable us to perform duties above nature, to overcome ourſelves and injuries—it will make us to want and to abound—it will make us able to live and to die, as it enabled Chriſt to do things that another man could not do. So a Chriſtian can do that, and ſuffer that, which another man cannot do and ſuffer, becauſe he hath the Spirit of Chriſt.

At the leaſt, whoſoever hath the Spirit of Chriſt, he ſhall find that Spirit in him, ſtriving againſt that which is contrary, and by little and little getting ground: where there is no conflict, there is no Spirit of Chriſt at all. I will not be large in the point, only I ſpeak this by way of trial, to know whether we have the Spirit of Chriſt in us, or not: if not, we have nothing to do with Chriſt, for Chriſt ſaves us not as he is out of us only; Chriſt was to do ſomething of himſelf that we have no ſhare in, only the good of it is ours; he was to redeem us by his blood, to be a ſacrifice; the title to heaven and ſalvation was wrought by Chriſt out of us; but there is ſomewhat that he doth not only for us, but he works in us by his Spirit, that is, the fitting of us for what he hath given us a title to, and the applying of that which he hath done for us. Whoſoever, therefore, hath any benefit by Chriſt, he hath the Spirit to apply that to himſelf, and to fit and qualify him to be a member of ſuch a head, and an heir of ſuch a kingdom. Whoſoever Chriſt works any thing for, he doth alſo work in them; there is a ſpirit of application, and that ſpirit of application, if it be true, is a ſpirit of ſanctification and renovation, fitting us every way for our condition.

Let us not abuſe ourſelves, as the world commonly doth, concerning Chriſt; they think God is merciful, and Chriſt is a Saviour. It is true: but what hath he wrought in thee by his Spirit? Haſt thou the Spirit of Chriſt? "or elſe thou art none of "his," Rom. viii. Wherever Chriſt is, he goes with his Spirit, to teach us to apply what Chriſt hath done for us, and to fit us to be like him. Therefore, let thoſe that live in any ſins againſt

conſcience,

conſcience, know it a diabolical deluſion to think God and Chriſt is merciful. Aye, but where is the work of the Spirit? All the hope thou haſt, is, that thou art not in hell as yet for the time to come; but for the preſent, I dare not ſay thou haſt any thing to do with Chriſt, when there is nothing of the Spirit in thee. The Spirit of Chriſt conforms the ſpouſe to be like the huſband, and the members to be like the head; therefore beg of Chriſt that he would anoint himſelf King in our hearts, and Prophet and Prieſt in our hearts, to do that which he did, to know his will as a Prophet, to rule in us as a King, and to ſtir up prayers in us as a Prieſt—to do in ſome proportion that which he doth, though it be in never ſo little a meaſure, for we receive it in meaſure, but Chriſt beyond meaſure. We muſt labour for ſo much as may manifeſt to us the truth of our eſtate in Chriſt, that we are not dead, but living branches.

Now Chriſt gives and conveys his Spirit, eſpecially and moſt of all, ſince his aſcenſion, and ſitting at the right hand of God; for after his reſurrection, he declared his victory over all his enemies, and therefore was able to give the Spirit without oppoſition; and upon his reſurrection, death and hell, and the anger of God were overcome, and our ſins were ſatisfied for; now Chriſt was head indeed, having trodden all his enemies under his feet, now he was enabled to give the Spirit, but upon his aſcenſion into heaven, and his ſitting there, he was more enabled; for even as the ſun, being ſo high above the earth, doth convey his light, and heat, and influence upon the inferior bodies, ſo Chriſt being ſo highly advanced, is fitter to infuſe his Spirit and grace here below ſince his exaltation; therefore the church is fuller of grace, and grace hath been more ſpread and diffuſed ſince the aſcenſion of Chriſt, than before, and the Evangeliſt gives it as a reaſon, "The Spirit was not yet given, becauſe Chriſt was not aſcended," intimating, that after his aſcenſion, there was a more full portion of the Spirit given, God being fully appeaſed by the death of Chriſt, and Chriſt ſtaying the advantage that was fitteſt to give the Spirit; now God the Father gives the Spirit with the Son, ſo in both regards there was a greater fulneſs of the Spirit. Therefore the prophets, ſpeaking of the times of Chriſt, eſpecially of his exaltation, ſhew that then they ſhould be filled with the Spirit, that the Spirit ſhould be poured out upon all fleſh more abundantly than before. And that is the reaſon that the apoſtles ſo differed from themſelves, before and after Chriſt's aſcenſion. What a wondrous alteration was there! Peter before—he flees even

even at the voice of a maid, and they were full of contention and vain glory, but after, we see, when the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, came down after Christ's ascension into heaven, how courageous and valorous they were, that they accounted it a matter of glory to suffer any thing; and indeed, we have more or less valour and courage, the more or less spirit we have. Now, they having received more abundance of spirit, hereupon they were more courageous and undaunted at one time than another; and this abundance of the Spirit comes, especially, since Christ's advancement.

But how, or by what means, doth Christ give his Spirit to us? This Spirit that is so necessary for us, it is given by the ministry of the gospel, which is the ministry of the Spirit. Gal. iii. 2. "Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by "the hearing of faith preached?" When the love of God in Christ, and the benefits by Christ, are laid open in the preaching of the gospel to us, God gives his holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Now God in Christ would save us by a triumphant and abundant love and mercy, and the Spirit of God never goes but where there is a magnifying of the love and mercy of God in Christ; therefore the ministry of the gospel, which only discovers the amity and love of God to mankind, being now reconciled in Christ, it is accompanied with the Spirit, to assure us of our part and portion in those benefits, for the Spirit is the fruit of God's love, as well as Christ's. Christ is the first gift, and the Spirit is the second; therefore that part of the word that discovers God's exceeding love to mankind, leaving angels (when they were fallen) in their cursed estate; and yet giving his Son to become man, and "a curse for us"—the discovery of this love and mercy of God, and of his Son Christ to us, is joined with the Spirit, for by the Spirit we see our cursed state, without the love and mercy of God in Christ; and likewise, we are convinced of the love of God in Christ, and thereupon we love God again, and trust to his mercy, and out of love to him perform all chearful obedience; whatsoever we do else, if it be not stirred by the Spirit, apprehending the love of God in Christ, it is but morality. A man shall never go to heaven, but by such a disposition, and frame and temper of soul, as is wrought by the Holy Ghost, persuading the soul first of the love and favour of God in Christ.

What are all our performances, if they be not out of love to God? And how shall we love God, except we be persuaded that he

he loves us firſt? Therefore the goſpel breeds love in us to God, and hath the Spirit together with it, working a bleſſed frame of ſanctification, whereby we are diſpoſed to every good duty.—Therefore, if we would have the Spirit of God, let us attend upon the ſweet promiſes of ſalvation, upon the doctrine of Chriſt; for together with the knowledge of theſe things, the Holy Ghoſt ſlides, and inſinuates, and infuſeth himſelf into our ſouls.

Therefore the Miniſters of the goſpel ſhould be much in laying open the riches of God in Chriſt—in unfolding Chriſt, all other things will follow; as St. Paul in Tit. ii. 12. "The grace of "God hath ſhined—hath appeared glorioufly, teaching us to "deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live holily and "ſoberly in this preſent world." Where the grace and love of God is perſuaded and ſhed into the ſoul, all will follow.

What is the reaſon that former times were called dark times? And ſo they were: The times of Popery was a dark age. Chriſt was veiled—the goſpel was veiled; there was no preaching of ſalvation by Chriſt alone—people were ſent to ſtocks and ſtones, and to ſaints, and inſtead of the word, they were ſent to legends, and ſuch things; Chriſt was obſcured, thereupon they were dark ages. Thoſe ages wherein the Spirit of God is moſt, is where Chriſt is moſt preached; and people are beſt always where there is moſt Spirit, and they are moſt joyful, and comfortable, and holy, where Chriſt is truly laid open to the hearts of people;—the preaching of mere morality, (if men be not careful to open Chriſt, to know how ſalvation is wrought by Chriſt, and how all good comes by Chriſt) it will never make a man perfectly good, and fit him for heaven; it may make a man reform many abuſes, like a philoſopher, who hath his reward and reſpect amongſt men, but nothing to give comfort at the hour of death, and the day of judgment; that only whereby the Spirit is conveyed, is the knowledge and preaching of Chriſt in his ſtate and offices.

Again, the Spirit of Chriſt is given in obedience to this goſpel; Acts v. 32. "He gives the Holy Ghoſt to them that obey "him." Now there is "the obedience of faith, and the obe-"dience of life." When the ſoul is wrought to obedience, to believe, and to be directed by God, then the Holy Spirit is given in a further meaſure ſtill; the Holy Ghoſt is given to them that obey, to them that do not reſiſt the Spirit of God; for in the miniſtry of the goſpel, the Spirit is given in ſome degree to repro-

bates—it is offered, it knocks at the hearts of the vileſt perſons, that live in filthy and falſe courſes of life, whoſe tongues and bodies are all inſtruments of an unſanctified ſoul to offend God—they have gracious motions offered them, but then they do not obey them; therefore the Spirit ſeizeth not upon them to rule in them—they have the Spirit knocking upon them, but he doth not dwell in them, and take up his lodging in them. The Spirit is given to them that obey the ſweet motions of it. Now who is it that hears the bleſſed word of God, the bleſſed tidings of ſalvation, but he hath ſweet motions of the Spirit to be in love with God, and the mercy of God, and to hate ſin a little for a time; then preſently upon it corruption joins, and ſwells againſt thoſe motions, and they only reſt in the bare motion, and never come to any perfection. This is the ſtate of reprobates in the church; they have many motions by the Holy Ghoſt, but their hearts are not ſubdued to obedience—not to conſtant obedience.

Therefore, if we would have the Spirit of Chriſt, let us labour to ſubject ourſelves unto it, when we have any good motion by the miniſtry of the word, or by conference, or by reading of good things (as holy things have a ſavour in them—the Spirit breathes in holy exerciſes). Oh give way to the motions of God's Spirit! we ſhall not have them again, perhaps; turn not back thoſe bleſſed meſſengers—let us entertain them—let the Spirit dwell and rule in us, it is the moſt bleſſed lodger that ever we entertained in all our lives. If we let the Spirit guide and rule us, it will lead us, and govern us, and ſupport us in life and death, and never leave us till it has raiſed our bodies; the Spirit of Chriſt in us at length will quicken our dead bodies—Rom. viii. it will never leave us till it has brought us to heaven. This is the ſtate of thoſe that belong to God, that give way to the motions of God's ſpirit to rule and guide them; therefore, if we would have the Spirit of Chriſt, let us take heed of rebelling againſt it.

This is the ſtate of many of us, (the Lord be merciful to us, and cure us) that we do not only not receive the motions of the Spirit deeply into us, but if they be ſuch as croſs us in our pleaſures and profits, though the word and Spirit join together, there is a riſing of the proud ſpirit of man againſt ſo much of the Spirit, and the motions of it, and againſt ſuch part of the word as croſſeth us. This will be laid heavy to our charge one day, that we would bring the Spirit of God to our corruptions, and not bring our hearts to God's Spirit; and hereupon are thoſe phraſes in the ſcripture,

ſcripture, of tempting the Spirit, "Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Spirit;" that is, when men will do that which is ſinful, and try whether God will forgive them, and put it off or not; how many are there that tempt the Spirit, that put it off? Perhaps I ſhall have the like motions another time—I ſhall have better occaſion when I can gain no more, when I can have my pleaſures no more. "Thus men reſiſt the Spirit," as St Stephen ſaith; that is, when the Spirit diſcovers to them what they ſhould believe, and what they ſhould do, and they ſee it croſſeth their reſolution to be naught, hereupon they reſiſt the work of the Spirit, that elſe would cloſe with their ſouls, and ſanctify them, and fit them for heaven, if they would give way to it.—And there is a quenching of the Spirit; that is, when men have ſweet motions of the Spirit, and preſently, by ſome ill language or courſe of life, they defile their veſſels, and quench the ſweet motions of the Spirit.

Let us take heed of all theſe—of tempting, of reſiſting, and quenching the Spirit, for undoubtedly (living in the boſom of the church) we have many heavenly motions, eſpecially thoſe that have ſo much goodneſs in them, as to attend upon God's ordinances; they have thoſe motions at thoſe times, that they never have after, perhaps; but they either reſiſt them, or quench them, and wrong and grieve the Spirit, as Saint Paul ſaith, "Grieve "not the Spirit of God, whereby you are ſealed to the day of re-"demption," Eph. v. Men ſpeak or do ſomewhat that grieves the Spirit of God in them; their conſcience being enlightened by the Spirit, tells them that they have done that which is naught, yet notwithſtanding, for this or that advantage, to pleaſe this or that company, they will ſpeak or do that which is evil, and then the Spirit that was given in ſome meaſure before, is grieved at this carnal and ſinful liberty. Therefore, if ye would be guided by the Spirit of Chriſt, take heed of all theſe, and of ſuch like courſes.

Another means whereby we may come to obtain the Spirit, is prayer. To be guided by the Spirit of Chriſt, (next to Chriſt himſelf, our Saviour) is the moſt excellent thing in the world; therefore it is worth the begging for and getting. Luke xi. 13. "How much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his holy Spi-"rit to them that aſk him?" Inſinuating, that we can aſk nothing greater than the Spirit. A man that hath a ſanctified judgment, next to the forgiveneſs of his ſins through Chriſt, begs

nothing more than the Spirit to witneſs the favour of God in Chriſt, and to him for other favours, eſpecially to fit us for the world to come. God can give nothing greater, nor we can beg any thing greater, if we have ſanctified judgments, than the Spirit of God; therefore let us have a high eſteem of the holy Spirit—of the motions of it, and out of an high eſteem in our hearts, beg of God the guidance of the Spirit, that he would lead us by his Spirit, and ſubdue our corruptions, that we may not be led by our own luſts, and ſo conſequently by Satan, who leads us by our own luſts in the way that leads to perdition. So much for that, "I will put my Spirit," &c.

"And he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles."—After Chriſt was fully furniſhed, as he was furniſhed with the Spirit of God, and with a commiſſion from heaven, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt—having this high commiſſion, and gifts for it by the Spirit, he falls upon his office preſently. We are never fit for any thing till we have the Spirit, and when we have the Spirit, it is active, and vigorous, and working. "He ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles."

Queſt.—What is meant by judgment here?

By judgment is meant laws. He ſhall declare his laws, his truth, and, together with declaring the truth of the goſpel, which is his evangelical law, he ſhall declare it in the ſoul, and bow the neck of the inward man to the obedience of this his judgment.—Chriſt then by himſelf, and his apoſtles and miniſters, ſhall declare his truth (which is the ſceptre of his government) to the Gentiles, and not only declare it, as Princes do their laws, by proclamations and ſtatutes, &c. but he ſhall declare it to the heart by his Spirit.

Now, in the Hebrew language, ordinarily, wiſe government is called judgment, 'he ſhall declare judgment,' that is, his manner of government, he ſhall declare it by his Spirit, and cauſe our ſpirits to ſubmit to it.

And, indeed, grace is called judgment in the phraſe of ſcripture—the grace of ſanctification, becauſe it is agreeable to judgment—to God's law; it is agreeable to it, and wrought by it in the ſoul, and it is the beſt judgment for grace, whereby the ſoul is ſubject to the judgment, and law, and rule of God; it muſt needs be the beſt judgment, becauſe it is agreeable to God's judgment. Grace judgeth aright of things, and ſubdues all things—the affections and inward man to itſelf.

But

But why is the word of God called judgment?

It is called ſo frequently in the Pſalms, and in other places of ſcripture, becauſe the truth of God ſhews what God doth judge. Judgment is originally in God, who is the firſt truth, and the firſt good: the firſt truth judgeth beſt of truths—what is light, and what is darkneſs—what is truth, and what is error—what is good, and what is evil—what is ſafe, and what is dangerous; all will grant that God is the firſt light, and the firſt truth; therefore he doth originally judge of the difference of things, for even as in the creation he put an eternal difference between light and darkneſs, and ſeparated things that were in the confuſed chaos, and eſtabliſhed an orderly world, that heaven ſhould be above, and earth below—that one thing ſhould be above another, and all in judgment. So in the governing of mankind, he ſhews his judgment by his word, and that word ſhews how God judgeth of things. Laws ſhew judgment, what is to be done, and what is not to be done. The goſpel ſhews God's judgment, what he will have us believe and hope for, and how we muſt carry ourſelves in the way of thankfulneſs; if we do this, then the goſpel, the word of God judgeth what ſhall become us—we ſhall be ſaved; if we do the contrary, the word again judgeth what our ſtate ſhall be—we ſhall be damned: ſo it is called judgment, becauſe it judgeth what is good, and what is evil, and becauſe it determineth what ſhall become of us if we obey, or diſobey.

Hereupon it is that the word of God is a glaſs, wherein we may ſee our own condition infallibly, what will become of us. The word of God judgeth thus: he that lives in ſuch and ſuch ſins, ſhall come to this end—God will inflict theſe and theſe judgments upon him. Judgment, in the firſt place, is, you ſhall do this and that, becauſe it is good. Judgment, in the ſecond place, is, becauſe you have not done this, this ſhall befal you; ſo the evangelical judgment of the goſpel is this, "He that repents and believes ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life;" but he that arms and furniſhes his heart to rebellion, he ſhall periſh in his ſins. "He that believeth not is condemned already;" the wrath of God hangs over his head. So from this, that God's truth is called judgment, we may know how to judge of ourſelves, even as God judgeth in his word—we may ſee our own faces and conditions there; he that is a man of death, may ſee it in the word, and he that is appointed for happineſs, may there ſee his condition.

Again; not only the word of God, the goſpel, (which is out of us, in the book of God) is called judgment, but the work of God in the ſoul, Sanctification, is called judgment. Hence we may obſerve what is the moſt judicious courſe in the world, the moſt judicious frame of ſoul, when it is framed to the judgement, and truth of God, being the firſt truth. When a man is ſanctified and ſet in a holy frame, it is from a ſanctified judgement; the fleſh is ſubject to the Spirit. Here is all in a gracious order; the baſer part doth not rule the higher, but the higheſt part of the ſoul, a ſanctified judgment, rules all, becauſe the whole is in right judgment; therefore ſanctification is called judgment, and other courſes, though they be ever ſo faſhionable, are but madneſs and folly, and diſorder in the cenſure of the ſcripture. Nothing is judgment and true wiſdom, but ſanctification, and obedience flowing from ſanctification. Therefore, ſaith Moſes in Deuteronomy, "Then ſhall you be known to be "a wiſe people, when you obey the laws that I have given you," that only ſhews a wiſe judicious man to be obedient to God's truth, by the Spirit ſanctifying him.

Without the truth of God, and the Spirit in us, framing our ſouls anſwerable to the truth, we are out of all good order; for then, the affections that ſhould be ruled, rule us; then the body, and the luſts of the body, rule the ſoul, and the devil rules by both. What a ſhameful diſorder is this, when a man ſhall be ruled by the devil and his own luſts, which he ſhould tread under foot, and trample upon! And this is the ſtate of all that have not this judgment in them, that have not the word of God written in their hearts, bowing and bending them by the Spirit of God to ſpiritual obedience. To prove this, I will name but one place among many, Titus iii. 3. he ſhews the ſtate of all men, who are not brought into ſubjection by this judgment, by the word and ſpirit of truth. "We ourſelves (ſaith he) were ſometimes fooliſh "and diſobedient." Till this judgment is ſet up in us, we are fooliſh in our underſtandings, and diſobedient in our wills and affections, deceived and miſled by the devil and our own luſts; for that follows upon folly; thoſe that are fooliſh and diſobedient are deceived and led away to eternal deſtruction. "There is a "way that ſeems good in a man's own eyes, but the iſſues of it "are death," ſaith Solomon. This is the ſtate of all men who are not led with the judgment of God's truth and Spirit, ſanctifying and framing their ſouls to obedience; "they are fooliſh, "and diſobedient, and deceived," and ſo it will prove with them in

in the end, "ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice "and envy, hating one another."

Now, when God by his bleſſed truth and Spirit ſets up his rule in the heart, it brings all into captivity; as St. Paul ſaith, it brings all the inner man into ſubjection. The word of God is the weapon of God; theſe judgments are mighty in operation together with the Spirit, to beat down all ſtrong holds, and to ſet up another judgment there; it brings all into captivity to the truth and command of God, and to the motions of the Spirit. The word and Spirit beat down all the ſtrong holds that are raiſed up in the heart by ſatan and our corruptions. So we ſee here what is meant by this phraſe, "He ſhall declare "judgment to the Gentiles." It is a militant word, therefore I have been ſomewhat longer in unfolding it.

Now this is wrought by the preaching of the goſpel, "He "ſhall declare judgment to the Gentiles;" all grace comes by declaring, "The goſpel is the power of God to ſalvation." Let but the goſpel (which is God's judgment how men ſhall be ſaved, and how they ſhall walk in obedience, by way of thankfulneſs to God) be declared, and all that belong to God ſhall come in, and yield homage to it, and be brought into ſubjection.—The devil, in the Antichriſtian ſtate, knows this well enough, therefore he labours to hinder the declaration of judgment by all means: he will not have God's judgment, but men's traditions declared; he knows the declaring of God's judgment will breed an alteration quickly in men's diſpoſitions—for when he ſaith, "He ſhall declare judgment to the Gentiles," he means the conſequence, as well as the thing; he ſhall ſo declare judgement, that they ſhall yield ſpiritual obedience, and come in and be ſaved.

Let the devil do his worſt—let all ſeducers of ſouls do their worſt—if they would but give way to the preaching of the goſpel; let but judgment be declared; let God's arm be ſtretched forth in delivering the truth, he would ſoon gain ſouls out of the captivity and bondage of Satan; they know it well enough; therefore, by all the ways that they can, they ſtop the preaching of the goſpel, and diſgrace and hinder it, and ſet up men's traditions inſtead of the goſpel. But I will not enlarge myſelf farther upon theſe words, but go on to the next.

"He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his "voice in the ſtreets." Theſe words ſet down the mild, and

ſweet, and amiable manner of Chriſt's carriage upon earth.—Here, in his firſt coming to work the great work of our redemption, he did not carry the matter in an outward glorious manner, in pomp, but he would have his miracles concealed often, and himſelf hidden; his Godhead was hid under the veil of his manhood; he could not have wrought our ſalvation elſe. If the devil and the world had known Chriſt to be as he was, they would never have made thoſe attempts againſt him; therefore, conſidering he had ſuch a diſpenſation to work our ſalvation, as a King, Prieſt, and Prophet; he would not cry, and contend, and ſtrive; he would not come with any great noiſe.

Now here is an oppoſition to the giving of the law, and likewiſe to the coming and carriage of civil princes. You know when the law was given, all the mount was on fire, and the earth thereabout quaked and trembled, and the people fled; they could not endure to hear the voice of God ſpeaking in the mount, there was ſuch a terrible ſmoke and fire; they were all afraid: thus came Moſes. Now, did Chriſt come as Moſes? Was the goſpel delivered by Chriſt as the law was, in terrors and fears? O no: Chriſt came not in ſuch a terrible manner, in thunder and lightning—but the goſpel came ſweetly. A dove, a mild creature, alighted upon the head of Chriſt when he was baptiſed, to ſhew his mild manner of carriage, and he came with bleſſing in his mouth in his firſt ſermon of all, "Bleſſed are "the poor in ſpirit; bleſſed are they that mourn; bleſſed are "they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs." The law came with curſes: "Curſed is every one that continueth not in "all things written in the law, to do them." Chriſt came in another manner—the goſpel was delivered in a mild ſweet manner—Chriſt, as an ambaſſador, came ſweetly to intreat and beſeech. There is a crying, indeed, but it is a crying out of love and intreaty, not a ſhouting in a terrible manner, as was at the giving of the law. No! nor as at the coming of other civil princes into a city, with ſhouting, and noiſe of trumpets, with pomp and ſtate, and great attendance. Chriſt came not into the world to execute his kingdom and office in ſuch pomp and noiſe, as it is ſaid of Agrippa, Acts xxv. 23. "He came with great pomp." So worldly princes carry things thus; and it is needful in ſome ſort; people muſt have ſhews and pomp; the outward man muſt have outward things, to aſtoniſh it withal; it is policy in ſtate ſo to do: but Chriſt came in another manner; he came not to make men quake and tremble who came to ſpeak and

and deal with him—he came not with clamour and fierceneſs; for who would have come to Chriſt then? But he came in a mild, and ſweet and amiable manner. We ſee a little before the text, upon occaſion of the inference of theſe words, he commands and chargeth them, that they ſhould not diſcover him, and make him known; when he had done a good work, he would not have it known.

Now, there are three things eſpecially inſinuated in this deſcription, "He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreet." That Chriſt ſhould not be outwardly glorious to publiſh his own excellency, nor contentious—he ſhould not cry nor quarrel, nor he ſhould not be clamorous, if he had any wrong, to be all on fire preſently—but he ſhould be as a meek lamb—he ſhould make no noiſe—he ſhould not come in vain glory, or clamour, &c.

But here we muſt know, that Chriſt was a wiſe diſcerner of the fitneſs of times; for ſometimes he would have things publiſhed, ſometimes he would not—ſometimes he would be known, ſometimes he would not. Chriſt, in his ſecond coming, ſhall come in all majeſty and glory with his angels, and all the earth ſhall appear before him; but now, his wiſdom told him (now he came to ſave the world as a Prophet, Prieſt, and King, to work man's ſalvation) that he muſt hide and conceal himſelf; and ſo he ordered all his courſes by diſcretion. Every ſacrifice muſt be ſalted with ſalt—every thing ſhould be ſeaſoned with the ſalt of diſcretion; this is the ſteward of all our actions, to know what is fit. Chriſt knew it was fitteſt to conceal himſelf now at this time.

Now, by Chriſt's example we ſhould learn this, not to be vain glorious—not to make a great noiſe. You have ſome, if they do any thing that is good, preſently all the world muſt know it: this was not Chriſt's diſpoſition; it is a diſpoſition that is hardly wrought out of man's heart, without an exceeding great meaſure of the Spirit of God: for we ſee good men have been given to this way. David would number the people, that it might be known what a great monarch he was—what a great number of people he had: he was a good man, yet vain glorious; he ſmarted for it. So good Hezekiah: ambaſſadors were ſent to him from the king of Babylon, and that they ſhould know that Hezekiah was no beggarly prince, out muſt come the veſſels of the Temple, and all his treaſures, to ſhew what a rich king the king of Judah was.

was. His vain glory coſt him all his riches, as the prophet told him. So the diſciples, before they received a great meaſure of the Spirit, how vain glorious they were! they contended for the higher place, therefore they adviſe Chriſt to go up to Jeruſalem, that he might be known. As Jehu ſaid to Jonadab, "Come up, and ſee my zeal for the Lord of Hoſts." He accounts it nothing, unleſs it be ſeen. So fleſh and blood: if there be any thing done that is good, all the world muſt know it preſently.—Chriſt chargeth them that no noiſe ſhould be made, but that they would conceal him.

What ſhould we learn hence?

To be of Chriſt's diſpoſition: that is, to have no more care of the knowledge of things, than the light of the things themſelves will diſcover; to do works of light; and if the things themſelves will break forth to men's eyes, and they muſt ſee our light ſhine, then let them, and imitate our good works; but for us to blazon them abroad ourſelves, it is not the Spirit of Chriſt.

Let us labour to have humility of ſpirit, that it may grow up with us in all our performances—that all things that we ſpeak and do may ſavour of a ſpirit of humility—that we may ſeek the glory of God in all things, more than our own.

And let us commit the fame and credit of what we are, or do, to God; he will take care of that; let us take care to be and to do as we ſhould, and then, for noiſe and report, let it be good or bad, as God ſhall ſend it. We know it often falls out, that that which is precious in man's eye, is abominable in God's: if we ſeek to be in the mouths of men, to dwell in the talk and ſpeech of men, God will abhor us, and at the hour of death, it will not comfort us what men ſpeak or know of us, but ſound comfort muſt be from our conſcience, and the judgment of God: therefore let us labour to be good in ſecret. Chriſtians ſhould be as minerals, rich in the depth of the earth; that which is leaſt ſeen is his riches. We ſhould have our treaſure deep—for the diſcovery of it, we ſhould be ready when we are called to it; and for all other accidental things, let them fall out as God in his wiſdom ſees good. So let us look through good report and bad report to heaven—let us do the duties that are pleaſing to God and our own conſciences, and God will be careful enough to get us applauſe. Was it not ſufficient for Abel, that though there was no great notice taken what faith he had, and how good

a man he was, yet that God knew it, and diſcovered it? God ſees our ſincerity, and the truth of our hearts, and the graces of our inward man; he ſees all theſe, and he values us by theſe, as he did Abel. As for outward things, there may be a great deal of deceit in them, and the more a man grows in grace, the leſs he cares for them; as much reputation as is fit for a man, will follow him in being and doing what he ſhould—God will look to that. Therefore we ſhould not ſet up ſails to our own meditations, that unleſs we be carried with the wind of applauſe, to be becalmed, and not go a whit forward; but we ſhould be carried with the Spirit of God, and with a holy deſire to ſerve God and our brethren, and to do all the good we can, and never care for the ſpeeches of the world; as St. Paul ſaith of himſelf, "I care not what ye judge of me—I care not what the world judgeth—I care not for man's judgment; this is man's day." We ſhould, from the example of Chriſt, labour to ſubdue this infirmity, which we are ſick of naturally. Chriſt concealed himſelf till he ſaw a fitter time. We ſhall have glory enough, and be known enough to devils, to angels, and men, ere long. Therefore, as Chriſt lived a hidden life, that is, it was not known what he was, that ſo he might work our ſalvation: ſo let us be content to be hidden men. A true Chriſtian is hidden to the world till the time of manifeſtation comes; when the time came, Chriſt then glorioufly diſcovered what he was; ſo we ſhall be diſcovered, what we are. In the mean time, let us be careful to do our duty, that we may pleaſe the Spirit of God, and ſatisfy our own conſcience, and leave all the reſt to God. Let us meditate, in the fear of God, upon theſe directions, for the guidance of our lives in this particular.

THE

THE

FOUNTAIN OPENED:

OR

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS REVEALED.

GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH—JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT—SEEN OF ANGELS—PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES—BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD—RECEIVED UP TO GLORY.

1 TIM. iii. 16.—*And without controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness, &c.*

THERE are two things that God values more than all the world beſides; the church, and the truth: the church, that is the pillar and ground of truth, as it is in the former verſe; the truth of religion, that is, the ſeed of the church. Now the bleſſed apoſtle St. Paul, being to furniſh his ſcholar Timothy to the miniſterial office, he doth it from two grounds eſpecially; from the dignity of the church, which he was to inſtruct and converſe in, and from the excellency of the myſteries of the goſpel, that excellent ſoul-ſaving truth: hereupon he doth ſeriouſly exhort Timothy to take heed how he converſed in the church of God, in teaching the truth of God. The church of God is the houſe of God, a company of people that God cares for more than for all mankind beſides; for whom the world ſtands, for whom all things are; it is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. And for the truth of God, that muſt be taught in this church; it is ſo excellent a thing, that we ſee the bleſſed apoſtle here uſeth great words, high ſtyles, lofty expreſſions concerning it. As the matter is high, and great, ſo the apoſtle hath expreſſions ſuitable: a full heart breeds full expreſſions. As no man went beyond St. Paul, in the deep ſenſe of

of his own unworthineſs, and of his ſtate by nature, ſo there was no man reached higher in large and rich thoughts and expreſſions of the excellency of Chriſt, and the good things we have by him: as we ſee here; ſetting forth the excellency of the miniſterial calling; being to deal with God's truth towards God's people, he ſets forth evangelical truth gloriouſly here; "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs; God manifeſted in the fleſh," &c.

In theſe words, then, there is a preface; and then, a particular explication; there is a fountain, or ſpring, and the ſtreams iſſuing from it; the root, and the branches; there is (as it were) a porch to this great houſe. Great buildings have fair entrances; ſo this glorious deſcription of the myſteries of the goſpel, it hath a fair porch and entry to it: "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs."

Then the fabric itſelf is parcelled out in ſix particulars:

God manifeſted in the fleſh—juſtified in the Spirit—ſeen of angels—preached unto the Gentiles—believed on in the world—received up to glory.

Firſt, for the preface; whereby he makes way to raiſe up the ſpirit of Timothy (and in him us) unto a reverend and holy attending to the bleſſed myſteries that follow: "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs."

In this preface, there is firſt the thing itſelf, Godlineſs;—then the deſcription of it, it is a myſtery;—and the adjunct, it is a great myſtery;—and then the ſeal of it; it is a great myſtery without all controverſy: by the confeſſion of all, as the word ſignifies; there are none that ever felt the power of godlineſs, but they have confeſſed it to be a great myſtery.

Godlineſs is a myſtery, and a great myſtery; and it is ſo under the ſeal of public confeſſion. To obſerve ſomewhat from each of theſe.

"Godlineſs."—Godlineſs is either the principles of Chriſtian religion, or the inward diſpoſition of the ſoul towards them—the inward holy affection of the ſoul; the word implieth both; for godlineſs is not only the naked principles of religion, but likewiſe the Chriſtian affection, the inward bent of the ſoul, ſuitable to divine principles; there muſt be a godly diſpoſition, carrying us to godly truths. That godlineſs includes the truths themſelves,

I need go no further than the connexion: in the laſt words of the former verſe, "The church is the pillar and ground of truth;" and then it follows, "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery (he doth not ſay of truth, but) of godlineſs;" inſtead of truth, he ſayeth godlineſs.

The ſame word implies the truths themſelves, and the affection and diſpoſition of the ſoul toward the truths, to ſhew that both muſt always go together. Whereſoever Chriſtian truth is known as it ſhould be, there is a ſupernatural light: it is not only a godly truth in itſelf, but it is embraced with godly affections. Theſe bleſſed truths of the goſpel, they require and breed a godly diſpoſition; the end of them is godlineſs—they frame the ſoul to godlineſs. Thus we ſee the truths themſelves are godlineſs, carrying us to God and holineſs: this I need not much ſtand on. But that there muſt be an affection anſwerable, and that this truth breeds this, is a little to be conſidered. Why is religion itſelf called faith, and the grace in the ſoul alſo called faith? To ſhew that faith, that is, the truth revealed, (as we ſay, the apoſtle's faith) it breeds faith, and muſt be apprehended by faith: therefore one word includes both the object, the thing believed, and likewiſe the diſpoſition of the ſoul to that object. So, here godlineſs is the thing itſelf, the principles of religion, and likewiſe the diſpoſition of the ſoul, that thoſe truths work, where they are entertained as they ſhould be. Hence follow theſe other truths briefly.

Firſt of all, that no truth breeds godlineſs and piety of life, but divine truth; for that is called godlineſs, becauſe it breeds godlineſs: all the devices of men in the world cannot breed godlineſs—all is ſuperſtition, and not godlineſs, which is not bred by a divine truth.

Again: ſince that divine truth is called godlineſs, it ſhews us, if we would be godly, we muſt be ſo from reaſons of chriſtianity; not (as I ſaid) by framing devices of our own, as graceleſs fooliſh men do, as we ſee in Popery, it is full of ceremonies of their own deviſing; but if we will be godly, it muſt be by reaſons and motives from divine truth, that breeds godlineſs. It is but a baſtard godlineſs, a baſtard religion, that is from a good intention, without a good ground: therefore the word implies both the tenet, the doctrine, and the frame of ſoul anſwerable to that doctrine. Good principles, without an impreſſion of them on the ſoul, are nothing, they will but help us to be damned; and

godlineſs,

godlineſs, without a frame of doctrine, is nothing but ſuperſtition: godlineſs in doctrine, frames the ſoul to godlineſs in converſation. There are many, who out of a natural ſuperſtition, (which is always accompanied with a poiſonous malicious diſpoſition againſt the truth of God) they will have devices of their own, and theſe they will force with all their power: but if we will be godly, it muſt be by reaſons fetched from divine truth.

Again: hence we may fetch a rule, of diſcerning when we are godly. What makes a true Chriſtian? When he nakedly believes the grounds of divine truth, the articles of the faith, when he can repeat them over, does that make a true Chriſtian? No: But when theſe truths breed, and work godlineſs, (for religion is a truth according to godlineſs, not according to ſpeculation only, and notion) whereſoever theſe fundamental truths are embraced, there is godlineſs with them; a man cannot embrace religion in truth, but he muſt be godly. A man knows no more of Chriſt, and divine things, than he values and eſteems, and affects, and brings the whole inward man into a frame, to be like the things; if theſe things work not godlineſs, a man hath but a human knowledge of divine things; if they carry not the ſoul to truſt in God, to hope in God, to fear God, to embrace him, to obey him, that man is not yet a true Chriſtian, for chriſtianity is not a naked knowledge of the truth, but godlineſs.

Religious evangelical truth is wiſdom, and wiſdom is a knowledge of things directing to practice: a man is a wiſe man, when he knows ſo as to practiſe what he knows. The goſpel is a divine wiſdom, teaching practice as well as knowledge; it works godlineſs, or elſe a man hath but a human knowledge of divine things. Therefore, he that is godly, he believes aright, and practiſes aright: he that believes ill, can never live well, for he hath no foundation—he makes an idol of ſome conceit he hath, beſides the word; and he that lives ill, though he believe well, ſhall be damned too. Therefore, a Chriſtian hath godly principles out of the goſpel, and a godly carriage, ſuitable to thoſe principles. And indeed, there is a force in the principles of godlineſs, (from God's love in Chriſt) to ſtir up to godlineſs: the ſoul that apprehends God's truth aright, cannot but be godly. Can a man know God's love in Chriſt incarnate, and Chriſt's ſuffering for us, and his ſitting at the right hand of God for us—the infinite love of God in Chriſt, and not be carried in affection back to God again, in love, and joy, and true affiance, and

not

whatſoever makes up the reſpect of godlineſs? It cannot be.—Therefore, it is not a cold naked apprehenſion, but a ſpiritual knowledge, when the ſoul is ſtirred up to a ſuitable diſpoſition, and carriage, that makes godlineſs. Now this godlineſs is—"a myſtery."

What is a myſtery?

The word ſignifies, a hidden thing; it comes of a word ſignifying to ſhut or ſtop the mouth from divulging. As they had their myſteries amongſt the heathens, in their temples, which they muſt not diſcover, therefore there was an image before the temple, with his finger before his mouth, ſhewing that they muſt be ſilent in the diſcovery of hidden myſteries. Indeed, the myſteries of the heathens were ſo ſhameful, that they did well to forbid the diſcovery of them. But I ſpeak only to unfold the nature of the word, which is to ſhut, or keep ſecret.

A myſtery is a ſecret, not only for the preſent, but that it was a ſecret, though it be now revealed; for the goſpel is now diſcovered. It is called a myſtery, not ſo much that it is a ſecret, but that it was ſo before it was revealed.

In the ſecond place, that is called a myſtery in the ſcripture, which, howſoever it be clear for the manifeſtation of it, yet the reaſons of it are hid. As the converſion of the Gentiles—that there ſhould be ſuch a thing—why God ſhould be ſo merciful to them; it is called a myſtery. So the calling of the Jews, it is called a myſtery, though the thing be revealed; yet, that God ſhould be ſo wondrous merciful to them, that is a myſtery.—When there is any great reaſon, that we cannot ſearch into the depth of the thing, though the thing itſelf be diſcovered, that is a myſtery; as the converſion both of Jews and Gentiles.

In the third place, a myſtery in ſcripture is taken for that which is a truth hid, and is conveyed by ſome outward thing. Marriage is a myſtery, becauſe it conveys the hidden ſpiritual marriage between Chriſt and his church. The ſacraments are myſteries; becauſe in the one, under bread and wine, there is conveyed to us the benefits of Chriſt's body broken, and his blood ſhed; and in the other, under water, a viſible outward thing, whereby is ſignified the blood of Chriſt.

In word, (to omit that which is not pertinent) myſtery in ſcripture is, either the general body of religion, or the particular branches of it: the general body of religion is called a myſtery in

in this place; the whole Chriſtian religion is nothing but a continued myſtery—a continuation of myſteries—a chaining together of myſtery upon myſtery.

And then the particular branches are called myſteries, as I ſaid before. The converſion of the Jews, and likewiſe of the Gentiles, before it was accompliſhed, was a myſtery; ſo the union between Chriſt and the church is a great myſtery, Epheſ. v. but the whole goſpel is here meant, as Chriſt ſaith, Mark iv. "The myſteries of the kingdom of God," that is, the deſcription of the goſpel. What is the goſpel? The myſtery of God's kingdom—of Chriſt's kingdom; a myſtery, diſcovering how Chriſt reigns in his church; and a myſtery, of bringing us to that heavenly kingdom. So then, the whole evangelical truth is a myſtery, for theſe reaſons:

Firſt of all: becauſe it was hid, and concealed from all men, till God brought it out of his own boſom; firſt, to Adam in paradiſe, after the fall, and ſtill more clearly afterwards to the Jews; and in Chriſt's time, more fully to Jews and Gentiles. It was hid in the breaſt of God; it was not a thing framed by angels or men. After man was fallen to that curſed ſtate, this plan of ſaving man by Chriſt, came not into the head of any creature—to ſatisfy juſtice by infinite mercy—to ſend Chriſt to die, that juſtice might be no loſer—it could come from no other breaſt but God's; it muſt be a divine, heavenly wiſdom. Therefore it was a plan deviſed by the bleſſed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; it was hid in the ſecret cloſet of God's breaſt; Chriſt brought it out of the boſom of his Father; "No man hath ſeen God at any time: Chriſt, the only begotten Son, in the boſom of the Father," he diſcovers the Father, and his meaning to mankind. Who ever could have thought of ſuch a depth of mercy unto fallen man, when God promiſed the bleſſed ſeed, Gen. iii. if God himſelf had not diſcovered it? Therefore, this reconciling of juſtice and mercy, it is a myſtery of heavenly wiſdom, that the creature could never think of; as it is excellently ſet down, 1 Cor. ii. through the whole chapter.

Again, it is a myſtery, becauſe when it was revealed, it was revealed but to few; it was revealed at the firſt but to the Jews; God is known in Judah, &c. it was wrapped in ceremonies, and types, and in general promiſes to them: it was quite hid from moſt part of the world.

Again, when Chriſt came, it was diſcovered to the Gentiles;

yet it is a myſtery, even in the church, to carnal men, that hear the goſpel, and yet do not underſtand it, that have the veil over their hearts; it is hid to them that periſh, though it be never ſo open of itſelf to thoſe that believe.

In the fourth place, it is a myſtery, becauſe though we ſee ſome part and parcel of it, yet we ſee not the whole goſpel; we ſee not all, nor wholly; we ſee but in part, and know but in part. So it is a myſtery, in regard of the full accompliſhment.

In the next place, it is a myſtery, in regard to what we do not now, but ſhall hereafter know. How do we know divine truths now? In the mirror of the word, and ſacraments. We know not Chriſt by ſight; that manner of knowledge is reſerved for heaven. So, here we know, as it were, in a kind of myſtery; we ſee divine things wrapped up in the mirror of the word, and the myſteries of the ſacraments. Indeed this, comparatively to the Jewiſh church, is to ſee the face of God in Chriſt—a clear ſight; but compared to what we ſhall have, it is to ſee in a glaſs, or mirror: if we look back, it is a clear ſight; if we look forward, it is a ſight, as it were, in a myſtery: even that little that we do know, we do not know it as we ſhall know it in heaven.

Queſt.—But is the doctrine of the goſpel itſelf only a myſtery?

Anſw.—No: All the graces are myſteries—every grace. Let a man once know it, and he ſhall find that there is a myſtery in faith—that the earthly ſoul of man ſhould be carried above itſelf, to believe ſupernatural truths, and to depend upon what he ſees not; to ſway the life by ſpiritual reaſons. That the heart of man ſhould believe, that a man in trouble ſhould carry himſelf quietly and patiently, from ſupernatural ſupports and grounds, it is a myſtery: That a man ſhould be as a rock in the midſt of a ſtorm, to ſtand immoveable, it is a myſtery: That the carriage of the ſoul ſhould be turned univerſally another way—that the judgment and affections ſhould be turned backward, as it were—that he who was proud before, ſhould now be humble—that he who was ambitious before, ſhould now deſpiſe the vain world—that he who was given to his luſts and vanities before, ſhould now, on the contrary, be ſerious, and heavenly minded: here is a myſtery indeed, when all is turned backward. Therefore we ſee how Nicodemus (as wiſe as he was) it was a riddle to him, when our bleſſed Saviour ſpake to him of the new birth, that a man ſhould be wholly changed, and new-moulded; that a man

ſhould

ſhould be the ſame, and not the ſame; the ſame man for ſoul and body, yet not the ſame, in regard of a ſupernatural life and being put into him, carrying him another way, leading him in another manner, by other rules and reſpects, as much different from other men, as a man differs from a beaſt. A ſtrange myſtery, that raiſeth a man above other men, as much as another man is above other creatures! For a man to be content with his condition, in all changes and varieties, when he is caſt and toſſed up and down in the world—to have a mind immoveable, it is a myſtery. Therefore St. Paul ſaith, Philip. iv. "I have entered into religion, (as it were) I have conſecrated myſelf"—the word is very ſignificant; "I have learned this myſtery, to be content." It is a myſtery, for a man to be toſſed up and down, and yet to have a contented mind: "I can want, and I can abound—I can do all through Chriſt, who ſtrengtheneth me:"—Why? Becauſe I have conſecrated myſelf to Chriſt and religion, and from them I have learned this point, to be content. Therefore, in the text here (as we ſhall ſee afterwards) not only divine truths are a myſtery, "Great is the myſtery of godlineſs," but he inſiſts on particular graces; preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world—theſe are myſteries.

In Chriſt, all is myſteries: two natures, God and man, in one perſon; mortal and immortal; greatneſs and baſeneſs; infiniteneſs and finiteneſs, in one perſon.

The church itſelf is a myſtical thing, for under baſeneſs, under the ſcorn of the world, what is hid? A glorious people. The ſtate of the church in this world, is like a tree that is weather-beaten, the leaves and fruit are gone, but there is life in the root. So, what is the church? A company of men that are in the world, without glory, without comelineſs and beauty; yet, notwithſtanding, they have life in the root, a hidden life: "Our life is hid with Chriſt, in God," Col. iii. The church hath a life, but it is a hidden myſtical life, a life under death: they ſeem to die to the world, but they are alive. This is excellently and rhetorically followed by St. Paul, "As dying, and yet we live—as poor, yet making many rich." A ſtrange kind of people: poor and rich, living and dying, glorious and baſe, yet this is the ſtate of the church here in this world! They are an excellent people, but they are veiled under infirmities of their own, and the diſgraces and perſecutions of the world. So, we ſee both the doctrine itſelf, and the graces, and the head of the church, and the church itſelf, are nothing but myſteries.

Uſe 1.—Is it ſo, that religion is a myſtery? Then firſt of all, do not wonder that it is not known in the world; and, that it is not only not known, but perſecuted and hated. Alas! it is a hidden thing, men know not the excellency of it. As great mens ſons, in a foreign country, find not entertainment anſwerable to their rank, but as they are apprehended to be by ſtrangers: ſo theſe divine truths, they find little acceptance in the world, becauſe they are myſteries; not only myſteries in the tenet, but in the practice; therefore the practice finds ſuch oppoſition in the world. "Father, forgive them," ſaith our bleſſed Saviour, "they know not what they do." The world knows not what it does, when it hates and perſecutes religion, and religious perſons. The church is a myſtical thing, and religion is a myſtery—it is hid from them. Shall we be moved by the diſgraceful ſpeeches of carnal men? They ſpeak they know not what—the thing they ſpeak againſt, is a myſtery: Therefore, why ſhould we regard the ſpeeches of the world, or follow its example, in embracing religion? Religion is a myſtery: Let the world be ever ſo great, it is not the knowledge of great men, or of rich men, it is the knowledge of godly men—it is a myſtery of godlineſs. Shall we follow the example of the world in religion, when it is a myſtery, and a myſtery of godlineſs, that only godly men know, and embrace? Look not, therefore, to the greatneſs of place, or parts, &c. it is a myſtery.

Uſe 2.—Again, if it be a myſtery, then it ſhould teach us to conduct ourſelves ſuitable to it. Nature taught even the heathens to carry themſelves reverently in their myſteries; away, be gone all prophane. Let us conduct ourſelves, therefore, reverently towards the truth of God, towards all truths, though they be ever ſo contrary to our reaſon—they are myſteries altogether above nature: There are ſome ſeeds of the law in nature, but there are no ſeeds in nature of the goſpel: therefore we ſhould come to it with a great deal of reverence. St. Paul teacheth us an excellent leſſon, Rom. xi. when he entered into a depth that he could not fathom, doth he cavil at it? No: "O the depth! O the depth!" So in all the truths of God, when we cannot comprehend them, let us with ſilence reverence them, and ſay with him, "O the depth!"

Divine things are myſteries—the ſacraments are myſteries; let us behave ourſelves towards them with reverence. What is the reaſon that there is one word in the Greek, and other languages, to ſignify both common and prophane? Becauſe thoſe that come with

with common affections, and common carriage, to holy things, they prophane them; becauſe, as the things are great, ſo they require a ſuitable carriage, not a common carriage. We prophane the ſacrament, if we take the bread and wine as a common feaſt; as St. Paul ſaith, "You diſcern not the Lord's body." We prophane myſteries, when we diſcern not. Beaſts, and beaſt-like men, diſcern not the relation of things—that theſe outward elements have reference to great matters, to the body and blood of Chriſt: they do not diſcern them from common bread and wine, though they be uſed to raiſe up our ſouls to the bread of life.

So, likewiſe, when we come to the word of God, and look not to our feet, but come to the church, as if we went to a play, or ſome common place, without prayer or preparation; when we come with common affections, this is to come prophanely. Here we come to myſteries, to high things, to great matters; therefore, when we come to converſe with God, we muſt not come with common affections—we muſt carry ourſelves holily in holy buſineſs, or elſe we offer to God ſtrange fire: "God was in this place," ſaith Jacob, "and I was not aware of it." So, when we come to hear the word, when we go to pray, when we receive the ſacrament, God is there, and myſteries are there, and we are not aware of it. It is a ſhame for us not to labour to bring ſuitable diſpoſitions: it is a matter of ſuch conſequence, that life or death depends upon it. You know what St. Paul ſaith, 1 Cor. xi. "For this very cauſe, ſome are ſick, and ſome weak, and ſome ſleep," ſome die. Why? For coming with common affection—for not diſcerning the Lord's body—for not examining ourſelves—for not having anſwerable diſpoſitions to the greatneſs of the myſteries we go about. Let us not think it enough to come to the ſacrament, and then to let the reins looſe to all kind of vanity; the very heathens would be aſhamed of that. It is the bane and blemiſh of religion; and ſuch a crime, that we may fear that God will give all Chriſtendom a purge, (I mean) for our exceſs.

There is a lawful uſe of feaſting, and harmleſs recreations; but to come with unjuſtifiable vanities (which are not fit at any time) when we ſhould honour God for the greateſt gift that ever was, for the incarnation of his Son, to be more prophanely diſpoſed then, and to give ourſelves to more looſe courſes than at other times, how can it fail to provoke the juſtice of God, eſpecially it being common? Amongſt other things, we may juſtly look for the vengeance of God for this, not only upon this or

that place, for it is the fault of Chriſtendom. Shall we behave ourſelves thus prophanely at theſe times, when we ſhould walk in a holy diſpoſition? Is this the way to be thankful to God?—Let us labour to entertain and embrace theſe myſteries of the goſpel as we ſhould, with a ſuitable reſpect to them, for the goſpel will tarry no longer than it hath ſuitable love and affection to the greatneſs of the thing. The goſpel may leave us we know not how ſoon, and go to people that are as barbarous as we were, before the goſpel came to us. The Romans thought they had victory tied to them; but we have not theſe myſteries of the goſpel tied to us.

If we labour not for an anſwerable carriage, as God hath removed the goſpel from the eaſtern churches of Aſia, that are under the tyranny of the Turks now; ſo he may, and we know not how ſoon, take away theſe bleſſed and glorious myſteries. Let us reverence theſe myſteries, and bleſs God for them, and labour to expreſs our thankfulneſs in our lives and converſations, that God may delight to continue with us, and continue his bleſſed truth among us. Do but conceive in your own minds, what equity it is, that truths ſhould be obtruded upon men who care not for them—who live under the myſteries of the goſpel with as much liberty to the fleſh, as if they had never heard of it—that their lives are not better than Pagans, perhaps worſe!—When theſe things grow general, will God continue theſe myſteries to us, when there is ſuch a diſproportion of affection and carriage? Judge of theſe things. God would deal juſtly with us, if he ſhould leave us to the darkneſs of Gentiliſm, and Popery, and confuſion, and carry the goſpel further weſt ſtill, to a people who never heard of it, where it would have better entertainment than it hath had from us. I beſeech you, let us labour to conduct ourſelves ſuitably to this bleſſed and great myſtery, if we would have it continued longer amongſt us.

Uſe 3.—Again: are theſe things myſteries—great myſteries? Let us bleſs God, who hath revealed them to us; for the glorious goſpel. O, how doth St. Paul, in every epiſtle, ſtir up people to be thankful, for revealing theſe myſteries! What cauſe have the Gentiles, who were in the ſhadow of death before, to be thankful to God! What kind of nation were we in Julius Cæſar's time? As barbarous as the Weſt Indians—the cannibals were as good as we are! We that were ſo before, not only to be civilized by the goſpel, but to have the means of ſalvation diſcovered, what cauſe have we to be abundant in thankfulneſs!

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And shall we shew our thankfulness, by provoking God's majesty? There is nothing in the world which is a ground of such thankfulness, as the glorious gospel, which brings such glorious things as it doth. Men are thankful to men, for teaching and discovering the mysteries of their trades; and shall God discover the great mysteries of the gospel of Christ, and shall not we be thankful? Are there not thousands that sit in darkness? The Romish church, is it not under the mystery of iniquity? And that we should have the glorious mysteries of the gospel revealed to us; that the veil should be taken off, and we should see the face of God in Christ—what a matter of thankfulness is it to all gracious hearts, that ever felt comfort by it!

Use 4.—Again, it is a mystery: Therefore, it should teach us likewise, not to set upon the knowledge of it with any wisdom or parts of our own; to think to search into it merely by strength of wit, and study of books, and all human helps that can be: it is a mystery, and it must be unveiled by God himself, by his spirit. If we set upon this mystery only with wisdom and parts of our own, then what our wisdom cannot penetrate into, we will judge it not to be true, as if our judgments were the measure of divine truth; so much as we conceive, is true, and so much as we cannot conceive, is not true. What a pride is this in flesh, in worms of the earth, who will make their own apprehensions, and ideas of things, the measure of divine truth, as heretics heretofore have done! It was the fault of the learned in latter times, that they would come with their logic only, and strong wisdom, and such learning as these dark times afforded, to speak of grace, of the gospel of justification: they spake of it, and decided in a mere metaphysical and carnal manner: therefore they brought only human learning—they were furnished with Plato, and other natural learning, and with that they thought to break through all the mysteries in religion. We must not struggle with the difficulties of religion, with natural parts.

It is a mystery: now, therefore, it must have a double veil taken off—a veil from the thing, and the veil from our eyes. It is a mystery, in regard of the things themselves, and in regard of us. It is not sufficient, that the things are lightsome which are now revealed by the gospel, but there must be that taken from our hearts, which obstructs our sight. The sun is a most glorious creature, the most visible object in the world—what is that to a blind man, who hath scales on his eyes? So divine truth is glorious, it is light in itself, but there are scales on the

eyes of the ſoul—there is a film which muſt be taken off: there is a veil over the heart, as St. Paul ſays of the Jews, therefore they could not ſee the ſcope of Moſes, directing all to Chriſt. Naturally there is a veil over men's hearts, which is the reaſon, that though they have ever ſo great parts, and things are light of themſelves, yet they cannot ſee. Therefore, I ſay, the veil muſt be taken both from the things, and from our hearts, that light being ſent into lightſome hearts, both may cloſe together.

Uſe 5.—Again: being a myſtery, it cannot be raiſed out of the principles of nature—it cannot be raiſed from reaſon.

Queſt.—But hath reaſon then no uſe in the goſpel?

Anſw.—Yes: ſanctified reaſon hath, to draw ſanctified concluſions from ſanctified principles: thus far reaſon is of uſe in theſe myſteries, to ſhew, that they are not oppoſite to reaſon—they are above reaſon, but they are not contrary to it; even as the light of the ſun is above the light of a candle, but is not contrary to it. The ſame thing may be both the object of faith, and of reaſon. The immortality of the ſoul is a matter of faith; and it is well proved by the heathens, by the light of reaſon. And it is a delightful thing to the ſoul, in things that reaſon can conceive of, to have a double light, for the more light, the more comfort; to have both the light of nature, and the light of grace, and of God's ſpirit.

That which reaſon ſhould do here, is to ſtoop to faith in things which are altogether above reaſon; as to conceive Chriſt in the womb of a virgin—the joining of two natures in one—the Trinity of Perſons in one divine nature, and ſuch like. Here it is the greateſt reaſon, to yield reaſon to faith; faith is the reaſon of reaſon in theſe things—and the greateſt reaſon is, to yield to God who hath revealed them. Is not here the greateſt reaſon in the world, to believe him who is truth itſelf? He hath ſaid it; therefore reaſon itſelf ſaith, It is the greateſt reaſon to yield to God, who is truth itſelf; therefore faith ſtands with the greateſt reaſon that can be, for things have a greater being in God's word, than in themſelves, and faith is above reaſon: therefore it is the reaſon of reaſons, to believe when we have things revealed in the word. This is one uſe of reaſon in myſteries, to ſtop the mouths of gainſayers by reaſon, to ſhew that it is no unreaſonable thing to believe.

Uſe 6.—Again: ſeeing it is a myſtery, let no man deſpair. It

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is not the pregnancy of the ſcholar here that carries it away, it is the excellency of the teacher—if God's Spirit be the teacher, it is no matter how dull the ſcholar is—it is a myſtery. Pride in great parts, is a greater hindrance, than ſimplicity in meaner parts: therefore Chriſt, in Mat. xi. he glorifies God that he had revealed theſe things to the ſimple, and concealed them from the proud. Let no man deſpair, for the ſtatutes of God give underſtanding to the ſimple, as the Pſalmiſt ſays. God is ſuch an excellent, mighty teacher, that where he finds no wiſdom, he can create it: he hath a privilege above other teachers—he doth not only teach the thing, but he gives wiſdom and underſtanding. It is a myſtery: therefore as none ſhould be ſo proud, as to think to break through it with knowledge and parts, ſo let none deſpair, conſidering that God can raiſe ſhallow and weak men to comprehend this great myſtery.

Uſe 7.—It is a myſtery: therefore take heed of ſlighting of divine truths. The empty, ſhallow heads of the world, make great matters of trifles, and ſtand amazed at baubles and vanities, and think it a grace to ſlight divine things—this great myſtery of godlineſs they deſpiſe; that which the angels themſelves ſtand in amazement at, and are ſtudents in, that the men of the world ſlight and deſpiſe, or triffe with, as if it were a matter not worth notice: but I leave ſuch to reformation, or to God's juſt judgment, that hath given them up to ſuch extremity of madneſs and folly. Let us labour to ſet a high price on the myſteries of godlineſs.

Queſt.—How ſhall we come to know this myſtery as we ſhould, and to conduct ourſelves anſwerably?

Anſw —We muſt intreat God to open our eyes, that as the light hath ſhined, as the apoſtle ſaith, Tit. ii. "the grace of God hath ſhined"—as there is a lightneſs in the myſteries, ſo there may be in our eyes. There is a double light required to all things in nature—the light in the medium, and in the ſight: ſo here, though the myſteries be now revealed by preaching and books, and other helps, yet to ſee this myſtery, and make a right uſe of it, there is required a ſpiritual light, to join with this outward light. And hence comes the neceſſity of depending upon God's ſpirit, in converſing on this myſtery. There muſt be an uſing of all helps and means, or elſe we tempt God: we muſt read, and hear, and above all, we muſt pray, as you ſee David, in Pſal. cxix. "Open mine eyes, Lord, that I may ſee wonders

wonders in thy law." There are wonders in thy law, but my eyes muſt be opened to ſee them. He had ſight before, but he deſires ſtill a further and clearer ſight; and as the poor man in the goſpel, who cried after Chriſt, when he was aſked, "What wouldſt thou have?" anſwered, "Lord, that mine eyes might be opened!" So every one of us ſhould (conſidering it is ſuch a raviſhing myſtery) cry after God and Chriſt, 'Lord, that my eyes might be opened, that I might ſee wonders in thy law—that I may ſee the wonders of thy goſpel, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.'

Therefore it is that St. Paul, in Epheſ. i. and iii. prays for the ſpirit of revelation—that God would vouchſafe that ſpirit, to take away the veil of ignorance and unbelief from our ſouls, that we may ſee; and as it is, Epheſ. iii. that we may comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and all the dimenſions of God's love in Chriſt. This muſt be done by the ſpirit of God; for, as St. Paul divinely reaſons, in 1 Cor. ii. "Who knows the things of God, but the ſpirit of God?" Therefore we muſt plough with God's heifer; if we would know the things of the ſpirit, we muſt have the ſame ſpirit.

Now the ſpirit doth not only teach the truths of the goſpel, but the application of thoſe truths, that they are ours. This truth of the goſpel is mine, the ſacrament ſeals it to me. The preaching of the word takes away the veil from the things, and the ſpirit takes away the veil from our ſouls. It is the office of the ſpirit to take the veil off the heart, and to enlighten our underſtandings, and likewiſe to be a ſpirit of application to us in particular. It is to no purpoſe to know that theſe things are myſteries, unleſs they be for us, and for our good, that we know Chriſt is ours, and that God is reconciled to us: therefore, ſaith the apoſtle, "he hath given us the ſpirit, to know the things that are given us of God," in particular. So the ſpirit doth not only bring a bleſſed light to the ſcriptures, and ſhew us the meaning in general, but it is a ſpirit of application, to bring home thoſe gracious promiſes to every one in particular, to tell us the things that are given us of God—not only the things that are given to the church, but to us in particular; for the ſpirit of God will tell us what is in the breaſt of God, his ſecret good will to the church. He loves the church, and he loves thee, ſaith the ſpirit, therefore he is called an earneſt, and a ſeal in our hearts, becauſe he diſcovers not only the truth at large, but he

he diſcovers the truth of God's affection, in all the privileges of the goſpel, that they belong to us. What a bleſſed diſcovery is this, which not only reveals divine truths to us, but reveals them ſo to us, that we have our ſhare and intereſt in them!

Therefore, whenever we take the book of God into our hands, when we come to hear the word, beg of God the ſpirit; "My houſe (ſaith God) ſhall be called the houſe of prayer;" not only the houſe of hearing of divine truths, but the houſe of prayer.—In the uſe of means, we muſt look up to God, and Chriſt: it is impudence and preſumption, to come to theſe places, without lifting up our ſouls to God. Therefore, there is ſo little profit under theſe glorious myſteries, becauſe there is ſo little prayer, and lifting up the heart to God. We ſhould go to Chriſt, who opens, and no man ſhuts—and ſhuts, and no man opens: he hath the key of David; go to him, therefore, that he may both open the myſteries, and open our hearts, that they may cloſe with them.

In Rev. v. St. John wept, when the book with ſeven ſeals could not be opened; he wept, that the prophecy was ſo obſcure that it could not be underſtood: but then Chriſt takes the book, and opens it. So, when we cannot underſtand divine myſteries, let us groan and ſigh to Chriſt; he can open the book with ſeven ſeals, and lay open all the myſteries, as far as it concerns us to know. God's children grieve when things are not diſcovered to them.

There is a contrary diſpoſition in God's people to carnal Papiſts; they grieve that myſteries ſhould be diſcovered:—God's people grieve that they are not diſcovered enough. They make a perverſe uſe of this—divine truths are myſteries, therefore they ſhould not be publiſhed to people: but divine truths are myſteries, therefore they muſt be unfolded. Hence comes the neceſſity of the miniſtry; for, if the goſpel be a myſtery, that is, a hidden kind of knowledge, then there muſt be ſome to reveal it. God hath therefore eſtabliſhed an office in the church, with which he joins his own ſacred ſpirit, that both ordinance and ſpirit joining together, the veil may be taken off. "How can they underſtand without a teacher?" And, "To us is committed the diſpenſation, to preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt," ſaith St. Paul. Therefore there is this ordinance, to unfold theſe depths, as much as may ſerve for us. Prophane people, they think they know enough, they need not be taught, as if this were a ſhallow myſtery,

myſtery, or none at all. It argues a prophane and wicked heart, not to attend upon all ſanctified means—all is little enough; and ſometimes God will not grant his ſpirit in one means, becauſe he will make us go to another, and from that to others, and run through all. He denies his ſpirit on purpoſe in hearing, becauſe he will have us to read; and denies it in that, becauſe he will have us confer and practiſe the communion of ſaints; and all little enough, to comprehend this glorious and excellent myſtery. A man may know a prophane heart, therefore, by deſpiſing the improvement of any means of knowledge. It is a myſtery, therefore God's people deſire to have it taught.

Again, if we would underſtand theſe myſteries, let us labour for humble ſpirits, for the ſpirit works that diſpoſition in the firſt place: "God will teach the humble," Pſal. xxv. the humble, who will depend upon his teaching. Now, this kind of humility here required, is a denial of our own judgments, though they be ever ſo capacious for the things of the world. We muſt be content to become fools, that we may be wiſe—we muſt deny our own underſtandings, and be content to have no more knowledge in divine things, than we can carry out of God's book, than we can be taught by God's word and ordinances. This humility we muſt bring, if we will underſtand this myſtery.

And bring, withal, a ſerious deſire to know, with a purpoſe to be moulded to what we know—to be delivered to the obedience of what we know, for then God will diſcover it to us: wiſdom is eaſy to him that will. Together with prayer and humility, let us but bring a purpoſe and deſire to be taught, and we ſhall find divine wiſdom eaſy to him that will. None ever miſcarry in the church, but thoſe that have falſe hearts—they have not humble and ſincere hearts, willing to be taught, for if they have that, then God, who hath given this ſincerity and will, this reſolution, that they will uſe the means, and will be taught, he will ſuit it with teachers: God uſually ſuits men with teachers, fit for their diſpoſitions. Let a man have a wicked heart, and he ſhall find flatterers to build him up in all violent and ſinful courſes; God, in judgment, will give him teachers that ſhall ſuit his diſpoſition. But if he be a child of God, and has a ſincere heart, to know the truth, he ſhall meet with ſome who ſhall be as ſincere again, to tell him the truth. Therefore, we ſhould the leſs pity men, when we ſee them run into errors: God ſees that they have wicked diſpoſitions, (indeed, if they be weak ſouls,

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God will have mercy on them, if they are ſincere, though they be in error; but if we ſee men that may know the truth, and yet run into errors, know, that ſuch men have poiſonous hearts, a malicious bent of heart againſt the truth, or elſe God would not give them up to ſuch things as they are miſled by. There is much in that man's diſpoſition, who is carried away by falſe teachers; I mean, where light is diſcovered: but where God gives a willing mind, there he opens his meaning. Wiſdom is eaſy to him that will underſtand.

And take heed of paſſion, and prejudice—of carnal affections, that ſtir up paſſion, for they will make the ſoul that it cannot ſee myſteries which are plain in themſelves. As we are ſtrong in any paſſion, ſo we judge; and the heart, when it is given up to paſſion, transforms the truth to itſelf, as it were. Even as where there is a ſuffuſion of the eye, as in the jaundice, or the like, it apprehends colours like itſelf; ſo when the taſte is vitiated, it taſtes things, not as they are in themſelves, but as itſelf is; ſo the corrupt heart transforms this ſacred myſtery to itſelf, and often forceth ſcripture to defend its own ſin, and the corrupt ſtate it is in: it will believe what it likes, and what it loves; it will force itſelf to believe (although it be contrary to divine myſteries), when the heart is deeply engaged in any paſſion or affection. Let us labour, therefore, to come with purged hearts, (it is the exhortation of the apoſtles James and Peter) to receive theſe myſteries; for they will lodge only in clean hearts.

Let us labour to ſee God and Chriſt with a clear eye, free from paſſion, and covetouſneſs, and vain glory. We ſee a notable example of this in the Scribes: when they were not blinded with paſſion, and covetouſneſs, and envy againſt Chriſt, how right could they judge of the goſpel, and the unfolding of the prophecies to the wiſe men: they could tell aright, that he ſhould be born in Bethlehem; but when Chriſt came amongſt them, and oppoſed their indolent, proud manner of life, which kept people in awe with their vain ceremonies, &c. then they ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and againſt their own light, and hated Chriſt, and brought him to his end. So it is with men when their minds are clear; before they are overcaſt with paſſion, and ſtrong affections to the world, they judge clearly of divine things; but when theſe paſſions prevail within them, they are oppoſite to that truth which before they ſaw, (in God's juſt judgment).—Such is the antipathy and emulation of the heart againſt this ſacred

cred myſtery. The heart, of itſelf, is an unfit veſſel for theſe holy myſteries: let us deſire God to purge and to cleanſe them. It is ſaid of the Phariſees, in the goſpel, that when Chriſt ſpake important matters, they ſcoffed at him: But what ſays the text? Luke xvi. "They were covetous." Let a covetous, proud man, come to hear the word, he cares not to hear theſe myſteries—his heart is ſo engaged to the world, that he ſcorns and laughs at all. And men are unſettled: ſometimes they will grant truths, ſometimes they will not, as their paſſions lead them. As we ſee in them, towards St. Paul, Acts xxiii. before he diſcovered himſelf to be a Phariſee; "This man is not worthy to live:" but when he diſcovered himſelf to be on their ſide, "I am a Phariſee, and the ſon of a Phariſee," how finely do they mince the matter! "Perhaps an angel hath revealed it to him," &c. He was an honeſt man then!—So men either judge, or judge not, as their paſſions and affections carry them. Therefore it is of great conſequence, to come with clean hearts and minds to the myſteries of God.

There is, beſides this myſtery, a *myſtery of iniquity*, which St. Paul ſpeaks of, 2 Theſs. ii. There is the myſtery of Antichriſt, as well as the myſtery of Chriſt.

Queſt.—And why is that called a myſtery?

Anſw.—Becauſe there is miſchief, and error, and wickedneſs, conveyed under ſeeming truth, and goodneſs, and virtue. Even as in this, grace and goodneſs is conveyed to the world under a ſhew of baſeneſs and meanneſs. Therefore, in Rev. vii. it is ſaid, "the beaſt hath myſtery in her forehead." Indeed, there is the myſtery of iniquity in Popery; it was literally avowed by Julius II. for on his Papal crown there was written, "Myſterium," &c. till at laſt it was blotted out, and inſtead thereof was written, "Julius ſecundus Papa." They began to ſuſpect it might be found out. This is recorded by thoſe who ſaw it. It is a myſtery, indeed, but a myſtery of iniquity. But, more particularly,

Queſt.—How a myſtery of iniquity?

Anſw.—Becauſe, under the name of Chriſt, and of the Chriſtian religion, he is Antichriſt, oppoſite to Chriſt. He is both oppoſite, (the word ſignifieth Antichriſt) and emulous; one who would be like Chriſt—a Vice-Chriſt. He is ſuch an oppoſite, yet he would be his vicar! Under colour of religion, he overthrows all

all religion; and whilſt he would be head of the Catholic church, he is the head of the Catholic apoſtacy.

Theſe God will have in the church together—the myſtery of godlineſs, and ungodlineſs—of Chriſt, and Antichriſt. Why? That the one may be a foil to the other. And how ſhall men magnify, and reliſh, and highly eſteem this myſtery I ſpeak of, except they look by way of oppoſition to the myſtery of Antichriſt, and ſee how contrary theſe courſes are? Alas! the reaſon why they ſo oppoſe, as they do, the goſpel, and the purity of it, is, becauſe they are contrary myſteries, which muſt be maintained by ignorance: the goſpel, which is a myſtery, muſt be revealed, and God hath ordained that it ſhould be revealed more and more. Therefore, thoſe that would ſecond Popery, who are friends of it, are enemies to the goſpel, and to the publiſhers of it; they cannot carry their oppoſition handſomely.—All Popiſh proſelytes are enemies to the myſtery of godlineſs, becauſe where it is, it expoſes the myſtery of iniquity: indeed, the overthrowing of error, is the diſcovering of it, for none would willingly be duped. Popery muſt be diſcovered with the breath of Chriſt: that is, with a myſtery, which is too ſharp a breath for its myſtery to feel: therefore, blame them not that they are ſo bitter enemies to the publiſhing of divine truths—the one myſtery conſumes the other. As Moſes' rod devoured all the other rods, ſo truth eats up all oppoſing errors whatever. See but in experience: wherever truth is planted, (the goſpel, and ordinances, and religion of God) how ſatan falls down like lightning, and Antichriſt falls!— But this by way of giving light to the other. There are many myſteries, beſides the myſtery of iniquity in Popery: every trade hath its myſtery, and there are myſteries and ſecrets of ſtate: but this is the myſtery of all myſteries, which we ſhould devote ourſelves moſt of all to underſtand.

Therefore it is ſaid to be a great myſtery.

1. That is the adjunct: it is a great myſtery. And here I might be endleſs, for it is not only great, as a myſtery, that is, there is much of it concealed, but it is a great and excellent myſtery, if we regard whence it came—from the boſom of God, from the wiſdom of God—if we regard all who had any concern in it; God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; the angels, attending upon the church; the apoſtles, the penmen; preachers and miniſters, the publiſhers of it—it is a great myſtery.

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2. If we regard the end of it: to bring together God and man—man that was fallen, to bring him back again to God; to bring him from the depth of misery, to the height of all happiness. A great mystery in this respect.

3. Again: It is great, for the manifold wisdom which God discovered in the publishing of it, by certain degrees: first, in types; then, afterwards, he came to truths: secondly, in promises, and then performances: thirdly, the Jews were the church of God, and then come in the Gentiles:—A sweet, manifold, and deep wisdom; it was a great mystery, in the manner of conveying of it from time to time, from the beginning of the world.

4. Again: It is a great mystery, because it works; for it is such a mystery as is not only a discovery of secrets, but it transforms those that know it, and believe it. We are transformed by it to the likeness of Christ; of whom it is a mystery to be as he is, full of grace. It hath a transforming, changing power; it gives spiritual sight to the blind, and spiritual ears to the deaf, and spiritual life to the dead: whatever Christ did in the days of his flesh to the outward man, that he doth by his spirit to the inward man. Even by the publication of this mystery, wonders are wrought by it daily.

5. If we consider any part of it, Christ, or his church, or any thing, it is a mystery, and a great mystery. It must needs be great, when the very angels desire to pry into it.

6. If we regard those that could not pry into it, as it is, 1 Cor. ii. that the wise men of the world understood nothing of it; "Where is the philosopher," &c. There are no parts in the world that could ever enter into this; it is above the most profound wisdom—the deepest judgment—the most penetrating head; they are all as nothing here. It is a great mystery—it is a depth above all depths of natural parts whatever—it is a wondrous depth—it hath all dimensions, the depth and height of the love of God in Christ, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, saith the apostle Paul.

7. Again: It is a great mystery, because it makes us great, it makes times great, and the persons great, that live in those times. What made John Baptist greater than all the prophets, and others, in those times? Because he saw Christ come in the flesh. What made those after John Baptist greater than him? They saw Christ

Chriſt aſcend glorioufly, that John Baptiſt did not. So perſons and times are more or leſs glorious, as they have greater or leſs manifeſtation of this myſtery. Great is that myſtery itſelf, which makes all things great, which makes times and perſons great. What made the times of Chriſt ſo great? "Happy are the eyes that ſee that which your eyes ſee, and the ears that hear that which your ears hear." Why? Becauſe the Meſſiah was come. What made the ſecond temple greater than the firſt? the firſt, which was Solomon's temple, was more magnificent than the other? It was becauſe Chriſt came in the time of the ſecond temple, and taught there. So it is the manifeſtation of Chriſt's truth, which makes times and places glorious. Will he not make the ſoul glorious, then, where he is? Certainly he will. What makes theſe times glorious? (but that we have unthankful, dark hearts, or elſe we would acknowledge they are bleſſed times which all of us have lived in, under the goſpel)—The glorious goſpel, which ſhines in theſe times, out of Egyptian darkneſs of Popery. Little thankful are we for it, and that threateneth a removal of the goſpel; for being great things, and diſ-eſteemed, and undervalued, (men living under the goſpel as bad as under Paganiſm) will God continue theſe great things amongſt us, to be thus vilified and diſ-eſteemed?

Let us take heed, therefore, that we ſet a higher price on religion; it is a myſtery, and a great myſtery, therefore it muſt have great eſteem: it brings great comfort, and great privileges: it is the word of the kingdom. It is a glorious goſpel, not only becauſe it promiſeth glory, but it makes the ſoul glorious, more excellent than other perſons. Let us raiſe a greater eſteem in our hearts for this excellent truth—it is a great myſtery.

8. Again: It is a great myſtery, if compared to all other myſteries. Creation was a great myſtery, for all things to be made out of nothing—order out of confuſion; for God to make man a glorious creature, of the duſt of the earth, it was a great matter; but what is this in compariſon, for God to be made man? It was a great and wondrous thing for Iſrael to be delivered out of Egypt and Babylon: but what are theſe, to the deliverance out of hell, and damnation, by the goſpel? What are the myſteries of nature, the miracles of nature, the loadſtone, &c. to theſe ſupernatural myſteries? There are myſteries in the providence of God, in governing the world; myſteries of Satan, myſteries of iniquity, which deceive the world: the wiſe men of

the world all wonder at the beaſt—a great myſtery: but what are all myſteries, either of nature or of hell, to this great myſtery! I might be endleſs on this point.

Uſe 1.—Firſt of all, learn hence, from bleſſed St. Paul, how to be affected, when we ſpeak and think of the glorious truth of God, that we ſhould work upon our hearts, to have large thoughts and large expreſſions of it. St. Paul thought it not ſufficient to call it a myſtery, but a great myſtery: he doth not only call it riches, but unſearchable riches. So when he ſpeaks of the fruits of the goſpel, what ſtrange words the ſcripture uſeth! "Peace of conſcience, that paſſeth underſtanding;" and "joy unſpeakable and glorious; we are brought out of darkneſs into marvellous light:" as if all things were full of wonder in the goſpel, both the thing, and the fruits of it. Surely, all that have the ſame ſpirit, and have their eyes open, to ſee in any meaſure theſe excellent myſteries, they are in ſome meaſure ſo diſpoſed, as the bleſſed apoſtle was; that is, they have full hearts, and, anſwerable to that, they have full expreſſions: out of the riches and treaſure of the heart, the mouth will ſpeak. Therefore, let us be aſhamed of the deadneſs, dullneſs, and narrowneſs of our hearts, when we are to conceive or ſpeak of theſe things, and labour to have full expreſſions of them.

1. And that we may the better do this, let us labour to have as deep thoughts in our underſtandings as we can, of that myſtery of ſinfulneſs that is in us, and that myſtery of miſery. It is not to be conceived, the curſed ſtate we are in by nature: It is not to be conceived, what a depth of corruption is in theſe hearts of ours, and how it iſſues out in ſinful thoughts, and ſpeeches, and actions, every day. Indeed, there is a height, and breadth, and depth of corruption in man's heart, and there is a height, and breadth, and depth, of the miſery of man; for, as it is ſaid of this bleſſed eſtate, "Neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, to conceive the things that God hath prepared for thoſe that love him;" ſo, indeed, neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, to conceive the miſery that men are in by nature: only there are ſome flaſhes of conſcience, to give a little idea in this world, of that miſery which men, in the ſtate of nature, fall into when they go hence.

Therefore, the more clear knowledge we have of the myſtery of corruption—how prone our hearts are to deceive us—and of the

the great misery we are in by nature: the more we shall wonder at the boundless and bottomless goodness of God, in the mystery of our salvation; the one will sharpen the appetite of the other. And indeed, we ought to have views of these two every day, to look to the state we are brought out of, if we believe. If we be not yet in the state of grace, consider only what we are, how little there is between us and eternal destruction—that we are ready to drop into hell irrecoverably; and withal, consider again the infinite love of God in Jesus. These are considerations fit to take up our thoughts.

2. Again, if we would have large and sensible thoughts and apprehensions of these things, such as the blessed apostle, let us set some time apart to meditate upon them, till the heart be warmed. Let us labour to place our thoughts, as much as we can, upon them every day—to consider the excellency of this mystery of religion in itself, and the fruit of it in this world, and in the world to come: it is a good employment, for from thence we shall wonder at nothing in the world besides. What is the reason that men are taken up with admiration of petty mysteries of poor things? Because their thoughts were never raised up to higher considerations. A wise man will wonder at nothing, because he knows of greater things than those objects presented to him; he hath seen greater matters than those. So it is with a wise Christian: Do ye think he will stand wondering at great and rich men, at great places and honours, and such things?—(indeed, he knows how to give that respect which is due) Alas! he hath had greater matters in the eye of his soul, and hath what is great in this world, to him to whom the world itself is not great. What is great in this world to him to whom Christ is great—to whom heaven, and the mysteries of religion, are great? All things else are little to him, to whom these things are great.

Christ took up his disciples when they said, "O Master, what kind of stones are here? Here are goodly stones and buildings indeed!"—"O," saith Christ," "are these the things you wonder at! I tell you, that not one stone shall be left upon another." So it is the nature of shallow men to wonder at the things of this world, to be taken with empty vain things. Are these the things we wonder at? If we would wonder, let us come to religion, there we have him whose name is wonderful: Christ's name is wonderful, because all is wonderful in Christ.

He is wonderful in his perſon, in his offices, in the managing of them—to bring us to life, by death—to glory, by ſhame. He is wonderful in the government of his church; to govern by afflictions—by conforming us to himſelf, to bring us to glory—to perfect his work in abaſement—to bring it low, that he may raiſe it afterwards. There are wonders every way in Chriſt, not only in himſelf, but in all his courſes: there is "Peace that paſſeth underſtanding, joy unſpeakable, and glorious." Religion will teach us what to admire at. We ſee thoſe who are under Antichriſt, under the myſtery of iniquity; it is ſaid, Rev. vii. "They wonder at the beaſt." O! what excellent order they have among them, one under another! What a wiſe fabric it is! What a linking together of things! All is wonderful. Indeed, it is fit for them to wonder at, who have not ſeen theſe wondrous myſteries of the goſpel: but thoſe who have ſpiritual eye-ſalve, to enlighten the eye of their ſouls to ſee theſe bleſſed myſteries, how great they are! they will be far from wondering at any earthly thing, much leſs at the myſtery of Antichriſt. It is a great myſtery: therefore,

Uſe 2.—Let us uſe great endeavours to learn it, and great reſpect towards it, and great love to God for it: let every thing in us be anſwerable to this great myſtery, which is a great myſtery, without controverſy.

It is ſo under the broad ſeal of public confeſſion, as the word in general ſignifies. By the confeſſion of all, it is great: it is a confeſſed truth, that the myſtery of godlineſs is great. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, 'I need not give you greater confirmation—it is, without queſtion or controverſy, a great myſtery.'

Object.—What is more oppoſed than the myſtery of godlineſs?

Anſw.—We muſt therefore take St. Paul's meaning in a right ſenſe. It is therefore a great myſtery, becauſe it is controverted by ſo many learned men: were it altogether obvious and open, they would never controvert it. Upon theſe two reaſons, it is without controverſy.

1.—In itſelf, it is not to be doubted of: it is a well-grounded truth, as apparent and clear, as if the goſpel were written with a ſun-beam, as one ſaith. There is nothing clearer, and more out of controverſy, than ſacred evangelical truths.

2.—And as they are clear and apparent in themſelves, ſo they are

are comprehended by all God's people: however it be controverted by others, yet they are not conſiderable. All that are the children of the church, who have their eyes open, they confeſs it to be ſo, and wonder at it, as a great myſtery—they, without all doubt and controverſy, embrace it. Things are not ſo clear in the goſpel, that all who are ſinful, and rebellious, may ſee whether they will or not, for then it were no great matter to have faith—it were no great matter to be a Chriſtian; and then men could not be rebellious, becauſe things would be ſo clear. Things are not ſo clear in the goſpel, that they take away all rebellion; and that it is not a grace, to ſee that they are clear: to thoſe that are diſpoſed, and have ſanctified ſouls, they are without controverſy, and things are ſaid to be in ſcripture, as they are to thoſe that are holily diſpoſed. The immortality of the ſoul is clear by reaſon, from nature; yet, notwithſtanding, evil diſpoſed perſons will not be convinced of the ſoul's immortality, but live and die like atheiſts in that particular. The reaſon is clear, but it is not perceptible to an evil diſpoſed perverſe ſoul. Therefore, God doth point out the manifeſtation of evangelical truths eſpecially, that they may be clear to thoſe whoſe eyes are open, and not to others; not becauſe they are not clear to them, if their eyes were open, but becauſe they oppoſe them, and raiſe up rebellion and ſtubbornneſs of heart againſt them. It is an undeniable argument, to prove the ſcriptures to be the word of God, to a well-diſpoſed ſoul; but come to another, and he will never leave cavilling. Yet a man may ſay, 'Without controverſy, it is the word of God,' becauſe it is ſo to a ſanctified ſoul; other perſons are not conſiderable in divine things: therefore the apoſtle ſpeaks of them as they are to God's people, without controverſy. Hence, then, we may know who is a true Chriſtian: he that brings a firm aſſent to evangelical truths, that they are great without controverſy.

Queſt.—But is there no ſtaggering—is there no fear that it it may be otherwiſe?

Anſw.—Yes: but in faith, as far as it is faith, there is no doubting, no contrariety, for ſtaggering and wavering is contrary to the nature of faith, and believing: but becauſe there are always two contrary principles in a believer, therefore there is doubting in a believer, and wavering. Therefore, we are exhorted to grow more and more; and the end of the miniſtry is, not only to lay the foundation of a believer at firſt, but to build them up, that they be not carried away with every vain doc-

trine. It is a truth, confeſſed to be true: for divine truths are conveyed in a hiſtory, in the hiſtory of the goſpel; and what ground have we to call them in queſtion, more than the ſtory of Thucydides, or the ſtory of Livy, or ſuch like? We take them, becauſe they are the hiſtories of ſuch times: ſo the myſtery of the goſpel is without controverſy, becauſe it is a myſtery in a hiſtory. In this reſpect, a man is more unreaſonable, that denies it, than he that denies Livy's book to be Livy's, or Tacitus to be Tacitus. No man calls theſe into queſtion: why ſhould we queſtion this, that is, the myſtery of godlineſs, ſet down in the hiſtory of Chriſt, of his birth, his life and death, &c.? But, not to preſs that further:

Uſe 1.—I will only make that uſe of it, which a great ſcholar in his time, once did upon this point, a noble Earl of Mirandula: If there be no calling theſe things into queſtion, if they have been confirmed by ſo many miracles, (as they have been, in a ſtrict ſenſe) why then, how is it that men live as if they made no queſtion of the falſehood of them? What kind of men are thoſe, that live as if it were without controverſy, that Chriſtian truths had no truth at all in them? Men live ſo careleſsly and prophanely, and ſlight and ſcorn theſe great myſteries, as if they made no queſtion but that they are falſe. The lives of men ſhew, that they believe not this. That it is unqueſtionably true, I will give an inſtance or two:—If a man were to go through a ſtorm for ſome great matter, if he did believe he ſhould have ſome great preferment, would he not venture? Certainly, he would. Thoſe, therefore, that will not venture any thing for this excellent treaſure, this unſearchable treaſure, for their intereſt in the goſpel, do they believe it? He that will not part with a penny, for the gaining of a thouſand pounds, doth he believe that he ſhall have ſo much? Certainly he doth not: there is ſuch a diſproportion between that which he parts with, and that which is promiſed, that if he did believe it, his heart would yield and aſſent to it, he would redeem it with the loſs of ſuch a petty thing. Much more ſo in this caſe, having ſuch an excellent treaſure propounded.—Thoſe, therefore, that will deny themſelves no luſt, that will part with nothing for Chriſt's ſake, do they believe theſe things, which the apoſtle ſays are without controverſy? Certainly they do not; for there is a leſs diſproportion in the things I named before, than between any earthly thing, and the great good things we have diſcovered here in the myſteries of ſalvation. Therefore, we may ſee by this, there is little faith in the world.

Uſe

Uſe 2. Again, in that he ſays, "without controverſy," or confeſſedly, "great is the myſtery of godlineſs:" here we may know, then, what truths are to be entertained as Catholic univerſal truths, thoſe that without queſtion are received. Then, if the queſtion be, which is the Catholic truth, Popery, or our religion? I ſay, not Popery, but our religion. I prove it from hence: That which, without controverſy, all churches have held from the apoſtles time, (yea, and the adverſaries and enemies of the church) that is Catholic. But it hath been in all times, and in all churches, even among the adverſaries, held the poſitive points of our religion, that the ſcripture is the word of God—that it is to be read—that Chriſt is the mediator—that Chriſt hath reconciled God and man, &c. All the poſitive parts of our religion have been confeſſed, without controverſy, ever ſince the apoſtles times, of all writers, and are ſo ſtill, even among the Papiſts themſelves, for they hold all the poſitive points that we do: they hold the reading of the ſcripture, but not in the mother tongue—they hold that the ſcripture is the word of God, but not alone, but traditions alſo—that Chriſt is mediator, but not alone: ſo they add their parts, but they hold the poſitive parts that we hold.

Therefore, I ground this from the text: That which without controverſy hath been held in all times and ages of the church, and without controverſy held by ourſelves and the adverſaries, is more Catholic and general, than thoſe things wherein they diſſent from us, which were neither held from the apoſtles time, for they were the inventions of Popes, one after another. Their fooleries, wherein they differ from us, are late inventions, and we hold them not; they are leſs Catholic than that which they, and we, and all Chriſtians hold, ever ſince the apoſtles times.—But to come to a uſe of practice.

Uſe. Therefore, when we have the truths of religion diſcovered to us by the miniſtry, or by reading, &c. when they are conveyed to our knowledge by any ſanctified means, let us propound theſe queries to our own ſouls: Are theſe things ſo, or not? Yes: Do I believe them to be ſo, or not? Yes. If I do believe them, then conſider what the affection and inward diſpotion is, whether it be ſuitable to ſuch things, and ſo work upon our hearts, that our knowledge may be effective knowledge, a knowledge with a taſte, that ſinks even to the very affections, that pierceth through the whole ſoul, that the affections may yield, as well as the underſtanding; and let us never ceaſe, till

there be a correſpondence between the affection and the truth.—Are they true? believe them. Are they good? embrace them. Let us never reſt, till our hearts embrace them, as our underſtandings conceive them. And let us think there is a defect in our comprehenſions, that we ſhould call them into queſtion, if the affections embrace them not; for always, anſwerable to the weight and the depth of the comprehenſion of the truth, is the affection ſtirred up, and the will ſtirred up, to embrace it. A man knows no more in religion, than he loves and embraces with the affections of his ſoul.

The affections are planted for this end, upon the report of that which is good to them, to embrace it, to join with it; therefore, let us never think our ſtate good, till we find our hearts warmed with the goodneſs of divine, ſupernatural truths. "O! how do I love thy law!" ſays David. He wonders at his own affections. Let us labour to have great affections, anſwerable to the things; and never leave off, till we can love them, and joy and delight in them as the greateſt things, and, with bleſſed St. Paul, account all as dung and droſs, in compariſon of them. That knowledge is only ſaving knowledge, which works the heart to love, to joy, and delight, which works the whole man to practice and obedience; that only is ſpiritual knowledge. All other knowledge ſerves for nothing, but to furniſh God matter of juſtifying our damnation; that our damnation will be juſt, when, knowing theſe things, we do not work our hearts to love them, but reſt in the naked, barren knowledge of them. It is a pitiful thing, to know matters no further, and no deeper, than to furniſh matter for our juſt damnation. Now, all who have not a transforming knowledge, who have not a ſpiritual knowledge; they are in this ſtate. Therefore, we ſhould labour to ſee ſpiritual things in a ſpiritual light; for where ſpiritual light is, there is always ſpiritual heat; where ſpiritual evidence is in the underſtanding, there is ſpiritual embracing in the affections; evidence brings quickneſs; ſupernatural light, and ſupernatural life, go together. Let us labour, therefore, that our apprehenſion of theſe great myſteries may be ſupernatural, and ſpiritual; and then, as the judgment apprehends them without controverſy to be true, the affections will be preſent, to cloſe with them.

So much for the preface, "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs." Now we come to the particulars of this great myſtery, "God manifeſted in the fleſh."

This,

This, and the other branches that follow, are all ſpoken of Chriſt. Indeed, the myſtery of godlineſs is nothing but Chriſt, and that which Chriſt did; Chriſt was "manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." So that, generally, we may obſerve this, that "Chriſt is the ſcope of the ſcriptures."

Chriſt is the pearl of that ring, Chriſt is the object, the centre wherein all thoſe lines end: take away Chriſt, what remains?—Therefore, in the whole ſcriptures let us ſee that we have an eye to Chriſt; all is nothing, but Chriſt. The myſtery of religion is, "Chriſt manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit," &c. all is but Chriſt.

And that is the reaſon why the Jews underſtand not the ſcriptures better, becauſe they ſeek not Chriſt there. Take away Chriſt, take away all out of the ſcriptures, they are but empty things. Therefore, when we read them, think of ſomewhat that may lead us to Chriſt, as all the ſcriptures lead, one way or other, to Chriſt, as I might ſhew in particular, but I only name it in general.

He begins here with this, "God manifeſt in the fleſh;" not God taken eſſentially, but God taken perſonally; God, in the ſecond perſon, was manifeſted. All actions are of perſons; the ſecond perſon was incarnate. The three perſons are all God, yet they were not all incarnate, though God was incarnate, becauſe it was a perſonal action of the ſecond perſon.

Queſt.—And why in that perſon?

Anſw.—Becauſe he was the image of God: and none but the image of God could reſtore us to that image. He was the Son of God, and none but the natural Son could make us ſons. He is the wiſdom of the Father, to make us wiſe; and he is the firſt beloved, to make us beloved. Such reaſons are given by the learned, and not diſagreeable to ſcripture; for, indeed, it is appropriate to the ſecond perſon, the great work of the incarnation, God in the fleſh. Therefore, they uſually compare the incarnation of Chriſt to a garment made by three virgins, ſiſters, and one of them wears it. So all the three perſons had a hand in the garment of Chriſt's fleſh; the Father had a part in it, and the Holy Ghoſt ſanctified it, yet he only wore it: therefore the ſecond perſon is, "God manifeſt in the fleſh."

By

By flesh here is meant human nature; the property of human nature, both body and soul. And by flesh, also, is usually understood, the infirmities and weakness of man, the miserable condition of man. So, God manifest in the flesh, that is, in our nature, and the properties of it, he puts that on; and not only so, but our infirmities and weakness, our miseries; and, what is more, he took our flesh, when it was tainted with treason—our base nature, after it was fallen, which was a wondrous fruit of love. As if one should wear a man's uniform, or livery, after he is proclaimed a traitor—it is a great disgrace to such a man; for Christ to wear our garments, when we were proclaimed traitors, after we were fallen, it was a wondrous dignity. And he not only took our nature, but our flesh; he was God manifest in the flesh, that is, in the infirmities of our nature: he took our whole nature, a human body, and a human soul. And he took our nature upon him when it was at its worst—not in innocence, but with all the infirmities which are natural infirmities, not personal. Therefore he came to be so, that he might be pitiful.

Quest.—You will say, How can he be pitiful; there are many infirmities which he took not upon him: he took not upon him all infirmities.

Answ.—I answer: by proportion to those which he took, he knew how to be pitiful to those he took not. He is infinitely wise, he knows how to make the proportion: it is set down in Heb. ii. and Heb. iv. as one end of his taking our nature upon him, that he might be a pitiful and merciful Redeemer.

Object.—But some will say, Indeed he took my nature, and the general infirmities, such as weariness, and hunger, and the like; but I am sick, and troubled in mind and conscience.

Answ.—Though he felt not all particular grievances, yet, notwithstanding, having taken our nature upon him, that he might be pitiful and merciful, according to the proportion that he felt himself, he knows how to pity us, in our sicknesses and losses, and crosses, every way. And for the chief, the trouble of mind, alas! he knew it in that great desertion, when he cried out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!" So we may comfort ourselves, that we have a merciful, and pitiful, and gracious Saviour, God in the flesh. He hath taken our flesh upon him for that purpose, that he might have experimental knowledge of our infirmities and weaknesses, and from that, he might

might be the more ſweet, and kind, and gentle to us. He was not ſick himſelf, but by experience of labour, and thirſt, and the like, he knew what it was to be ſick, by what he felt. He knew not what it was to ſin, and to be troubled for ſin, becauſe he felt it not in himſelf; but being our ſurety for ſin, and feeling the wrath of God for it, he had experience to be compaſſionate, from this. He was weary, to pity thoſe that are weary; he was hungry, to pity them that are hungry; he was poor, to pity thoſe that are ſo; he was miſuſed and reproached, to pity thoſe that are in the like condition. You can name nothing, but he can, out of his own experience, be merciful and pitiful unto.

In that God, the ſecond perſon, appeared in our nature, in our weak, and tainted, diſgraced nature, after the fall, from hence comes,

1. The enriching of our nature with all graces in Chriſt, as it is in Col. ii. "All the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are in him," in our nature: in Chriſt there is abundance of riches; our nature, in him, is highly enriched.

2. Hence comes again the ennobling of our nature; in that God appeared in our nature, it is much ennobled: when our nature is ingrafted into a higher ſtock, into ſo glorious a ſtock as Chriſt, it is a high dignity; that now our fleſh is married to the ſecond perſon, it is a wondrous advancement of our nature, even above the angels. He took not the nature of angels. It was a great exaltation to our nature, that God ſhould take it into the unity of his perſon, for the human nature of Chriſt had no ſubſiſtence, but in the ſecond perſon. And this doth not any way debaſe the human nature of Chriſt, that it had no ſubſiſtence, but in the Godhead. Peter, and James, and John, &c. had a ſubſiſtence of their own; but Chriſt had no ſubſiſtence, but in the ſecond perſon: and yet, I ſay, it did no way demean the human nature of Chriſt, becauſe it was advanced to a higher ſtate, where it hath a glorious ſubſiſtence and being.

3. Hence comes the enabling of our nature to the work of ſalvation, which was wrought in our nature; it came from hence, "God was in the fleſh." From whence was the human nature enabled to ſuffer? Whence was it upheld in ſuffering, that it did not ſink under the wrath of God? God was in the fleſh—God upheld our nature; ſo that both the riches, and dignity, and the ability of our nature to be ſaving and meritorious, all came from this, that God was in our nature.

4. And

4. And hence comes this likewiſe, that whatſoever Chriſt did in our nature, God did it, for God appeared in our nature; he took not upon him the perſon of any man, but the nature: and, therefore, our fleſh and the ſecond perſon being but one perſon, all that was done, was done by the perſon that was God, though not as God. Therefore, when he died, God died—when he was crucified, God was crucified. If he had been two perſons, he had died in one perſon, and the other had not died. Now, being but one perſon, though two natures, whatever was done in the nature, the perſon did it, according to the other nature. He could not die as God, therefore (becauſe in love he would die, and be a ſacrifice) he would take upon him ſuch a nature, wherein he might be a ſacrifice. This is a great dignity, that our nature is taken into the unity of the perſon of the Son of God. Therefore, hence it comes, I ſay, that whatſoever was done in our nature, God did it.

5. Hence, alſo, comes the union between Chriſt and us.—Whence is it that we are ſons of God? Becauſe he was the ſon of man, God in our fleſh. There are three unions: the union of natures, God to become man; the union of grace, that we are one with Chriſt; and, the union of glory. The firſt is for the ſecond; and the ſecond for the third: "God became man, that man might be one with God;—God was manifeſt in the fleſh," that we might be united to him; and being brought again to God the Father, we might come to a glorious union. By this, that "God was manifeſt in the fleſh," it is, that he was married firſt to our nature, that we by union might be married to him: we had never had an union with God, unleſs God had united our fleſh to him, and, in that fleſh, had ſatisfied God. All that Chriſt did, ſaith St. Peter, was to bring us back again to God.

6. Hence, likewiſe, comes the ſympathy between Chriſt and us, for Chriſt is ſaid to ſuffer with us: "Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?" He is ſaid to be impriſoned in us, and we are ſaid to aſcend glorioufly with him, becauſe he took upon him our nature: ſo, if he be honoured, we are honoured; if we be deſpiſed, he is deſpiſed. There is a mutual affection and ſympathy between Chriſt and us.

7. Hence, likewiſe, comes the efficacy of what Chriſt did, that the dying of one man ſhould be ſufficient for the whole world: it was, that God was in the fleſh.

The apoſtle may well call this, "God manifeſt in the fleſh,"

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a myſtery; and place it in the firſt rank: for God to be incloſed in the womb of a virgin—for happineſs itſelf to become a curſe—for him who had the riches of all in him, to become poor for our ſakes—for him who ever enjoyed his Father's preſence, to want the beams of it for a time, that he might ſatisfy his Father's juſtice, and undergo his wrath for our ſins—here is a matter of wonder indeed!

Uſe 1.—And ſhall we think ſo great a myſtery as this was for a ſmall purpoſe? That the great God ſhould take upon him a piece of earth? That he ſhould become a poor and weak man? The immortal God to take upon him our fleſh, and to die? That he whom heaven and earth cannot comprehend, ſhould be incloſed in the womb of a virgin? For him to be ſo abaſed, as there was never any abaſement like unto Chriſt's, becauſe of the greatneſs of his perſon! If angels had done ſo, alas! they were inferior creatures—they were ſervants to God; but for the Son of God to take our nature, when it was ſo low! for ſo excellent a perſon to be abaſed ſo low! There was none ever ſuffered that which God in our fleſh ſuffered: for, as communion with his Father was ſweeter to him than to all men beſides, ſo, for him to want communion with his Father upon the croſs, when he cried, "My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken me!" it was the greateſt abaſement to him, being the moſt ſenſible of it; therefore, there was no ſuffering like that of Chriſt's.

And ſhall we think ſo great a matter was for a ſmall purpoſe—for little ſins, or for few ſins only? O no: it was to give a foundation to our faith, in all extremity of temptations; to ſtay our conſciences in the guilt of great and crying ſins! O deſpair not, deſpair not: this great myſtery the apoſtle ſpeaks of, for the great God to become man, was for great ſins, that, "where ſin hath abounded, grace might ſuperabound." God intended by this, to ſet down the accuſing conſcience, to quiet and ſtill it. God is offended, it is true, but, God manifeſt in the fleſh hath made reconciliation and ſatisfaction: he was a ſacrifice for ſin, and God will anſwer God. God the Son, will anſwer the diſpleaſure of God the Father, becauſe he is appointed to this office by him: "He is ſet forth," as it is, Rom. iii. "to be the propitiation." Therefore, in all riſings of conſcience in the time of trouble, in the hour of death, let us remember this great myſtery, God manifeſt in the fleſh. God's purpoſe in this, was to triumph (as it were) over all the clamours of conſcience whatever; over all things that ſatan, and the power of hell, can object. Let

ſatan

ſatan object what he will, here is a ſhield put into the hand of faith, to beat back all his fiery darts.

God, in the covenant of grace (which is founded in Chriſt, in God in our nature) doth intend to be gracious to ſinners. It is a greater myſtery than that of the creation; for God there did good to a good man; he made Adam good, and continued him good, while he ſtood; but after the fall, God intended to raiſe up the doubting, unbelieving ſoul, againſt the greateſt evils of ſin and deſpair, and againſt all objections for ſin whatever, from the greatneſs of ſin, either natural or actual. It is the glory of God in the goſpel, to glorify his mercy and goodneſs, in prevailing and triumphing over the greateſt evils that can be. Now, he is good to ſinners, and to great ſinners; ſo that, if there be faith wrought by the Spirit of God, raiſing up our ſouls, to lay hold of this God manifeſt in the fleſh, let us not be diſcouraged with any ſin; our ſins are but the ſins of men: but, God manifeſt in the fleſh, was made a ſacrifice for our ſins, and hath given a price anſwerable. What temptation will not vaniſh, as a cloud before the wind, when we ſee God's love in ſending his Son, and Chriſt's love in taking our nature upon him, to reconcile us, by the ſacrifice of his blood? Therefore, let us treaſure up this comfort; it is a ſpring of comfort, a well of conſolation, as the ſcripture ſpeaks; therefore, let us ſuck comfort out of this breaſt of conſolation.

We may turn over things now (in the time of peace) with eaſe; but in the time of temptation, when the ſoul is touched with guilt, and ſatan plies us with temptations, the ſoul will have no reſt, but in an infinite ground of comfort. The ſoul is naturally prone to miſgive, and to dread the worſt, and to conceive hardly of God in the time of temptation, as an enemy, and ſatan is then buſy about nothing ſo much, as that we ſhould have hard thoughts of God, and to make us forget the grand end of the great work of our redemption; which is to undermine our belief by all means, by ſetting before the ſoul ſuch grounds, as the moſt unbelieving heart in the world, if it did conſider of, would faſten, and lay itſelf upon. Therefore, let us labour to cheriſh, at ſuch times eſpecially, large thoughts of the infinite goodneſs and mercy of God, and of the love of Chriſt, condeſcending ſo low, as to be manifeſt in the fleſh for our ſakes.

It is a point of wondrous comfort, that now in Chriſt Jeſus, God becoming man, we can in him break through the juſtice of God;

God; for, as I said, when conscience is awakened, there are other manner of ideas of God, than when it is sleepy, and drowsy. A sleepy Christian has a slight idea of God, as if he thought as little of his sins as he doth himself. O! but when conscience is awakened, and when we are drawn from the pleasures of sin, and they from us, and conscience hath nothing to do but to look upon God, and upon the time to come, which is eternity, then, if there be not somewhat for conscience to oppose, which is equal to the justice of God—if there be not something about us, to cloath us, and arm us, to pass through justice, what will become of us! Therefore, it is a consoling consideration, that God was manifest in our flesh, and that to give satisfaction to God, that so conscience might have full satisfaction.

This teacheth us what we should do, when we find any trouble rise in our conscience for sins and unworthiness. Cast ourselves upon God in our flesh—God, who became flesh for us, and died for us, let us stay ourselves there. I am unworthy—a lump of sin—there is nothing in me that is good. O, but I have all in Christ: he is righteousness for me—he hath abundance for me, his fulness is for me. Therefore you have it, Col. ii. 16. "The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily." To what purpose is this fulness in him? He shews in the words following, "In him we are complete." Suppose in ourselves, we are sinners, and weak; that we are as bad as sin or the devil can make us, in the time of temptation, yet, "in him we are complete:" and, for this end, "the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily." Therefore, in all doubts, in regard of sin and unworthiness, let us labour for faith, (for faith is a grace which carries us out of ourselves, and plants and fixes us in Christ); let us consider of ourselves in him, and consider that whatsoever is in him, it is for us. It is no matter what we are ourselves—in him we are in a glorious condition.

And oppose him to the wrath of God, and the temptations of satan, for all will fall before this, God manifest in the flesh: he is God, therefore he can subdue all—he is man, and therefore he will love us. I know whom I have believed; him that is merciful, because he is man, and he hath taken my nature; and him that can subdue all enemies, because he is God, God in the flesh; a fit bottom and foundation for faith to rely upon. Let us have recourse to this, therefore, in all temptations whatever. We cannot glorify God and Christ more, than to go out of ourselves, and fix our comfort here.

By

By this, we have communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. This incarnation of Chriſt brings us into fellowſhip with the bleſſed Trinity; and it teacheth us what ideas we ſhould have of God—to have loving thoughts of him. Whence is it that we can call God Father? From this, "God manifeſt in the fleſh;" the ſecond perſon, to take away enmity, was manifeſt in the fleſh. Hence it is that I can call God Father—that I can boldly go to God—that I can conceive God as gracious and lovely.—And whence is it, that our perſons are become lovely to God? From this, that God hath taken our nature upon him; our nature is become lovely to him, and his is ſweet and fatherly to us.

This ſhould help us againſt ſatan's transforming of God and Chriſt to us, in the time of trouble; he repreſents him as a terrible Judge: indeed ſo he is, to ſinners that will go on in ſin; his wrath ſhall ſmoke againſt ſuch; there is no comfort to them in ſcripture: but to repentant ſinners, all is comfort—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden;" and, "Chriſt came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt;" and, "he came to ſave ſinners," as St. Paul ſaith. Let us conceive of God, now, as lovely, as a Father; and of Chriſt, as a ſweet Saviour, made fleſh for this purpoſe: He is God and man, becauſe he came to be a Mediator between God and man; a friend to both, being to deal with both. Therefore, we ſhould thus conceive of Chriſt, as a great and mighty God, the Ruler of the world, as Iſaiah deſcribes him; and conceive of him, likewiſe, as a meek, humble man—the one to eſtabliſh our faith, that we be not ſhaken, having ſuch a great God to rely upon; and the other, to eſtabliſh our faith in his good will, God in our fleſh: God, a name of power; God in our fleſh, implieth mercy and love, pity and compaſſion.

Therefore, let not ſatan abuſe our imaginations, if we have a mind to turn to God; for, as I ſaid, there is no comfort to them that go on in their ſins; God will wound the hairy ſcalp of them that go on in iniquity; and they treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath: there is nothing but diſcomfort to ſuch, the wrath of God abides upon them—they are in danger of damnation every minute of their lives—there is but a ſtep between them and hell. But for ſuch as intend to turn to God, God meets them half way. We ſee the prodigal did but entertain a purpoſe to come to his Father, and his father meets him. God in our fleſh hath made God peaceable to us: if we go to Chriſt, and lay hold on

on him for the forgiveneſs of our ſins, God in him is become a loving, gracious, ſweet Father to us. Let us frame our conceptions of God, as the ſcripture doth: when ſorrow for ſin poſſeſſeth our ſouls, take heed of going away from God, that took our nature for this very purpoſe, that we may boldly go to him.

Oh! what boldneſs have we now to go to God in our fleſh. To think of God abſolutely, without "God in the fleſh, he is a conſuming fire," every way terrible: but to think of God in our nature, we may ſecurely go to him; "he is bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh:" we may ſecurely go to God our brother, to him that is of one nature with us, and now having our nature in heaven. Think of God born of a virgin, of God lying in the cradle, ſucking the breaſt—Think of God going up and down teaching, and doing all good—Think of God ſweating for thee, hanging on the Croſs, ſhedding his blood, lying in the grave, raiſing himſelf again, and now in Heaven, ſitting at the right hand of God as our Interceſſor; conceive God in this fleſh of ours lovely to us, and now our nature muſt needs be lovely to him. The nature of God muſt needs be lovely to us, ſince he hath joined our poor fleſh to the unity of the ſecond perſon. Let us thus think of God manifeſt in the fleſh. To think of God alone, ſwallows up our thoughts; but to think of God in Chriſt, of God manifeſt in the fleſh, is a comfortable conſideration. To ſee the ſun alone in itſelf, in the glory and luſtre of it, is impoſſible, without hurting the eye; but to ſee the ſun in water, as we do in an eclipſe, &c. we may do it. So we cannot conceive of God alone abſolutely; but to conceive of God in our fleſh, is to look upon the ſun (as it were) in the water, or upon the ground. God in himſelf is ſo glorious, that we could never ſee him, as he tells Moſes, Exod. 33. "None can ever ſee God, and live;" that is, God nakedly, or abſolutely. Oh! but God manifeſt in our fleſh, we may ſee; and it ſhall be our happineſs in heaven, to ſee him there, to ſee God in our fleſh face to face.

We cannot too often meditate of theſe things; it is the life and ſoul of a chriſtian, it is the marrow of the goſpel, it is the wonder of wonders; we need not wonder at any thing after this. It is no wonder, that our bodies ſhall rise again, that mortal man ſhould become afterwards immortal in heaven; ſince the immortal God hath taken man's nature, and died in it. All the articles of our faith, and all miracles, yield to this grand thing, "God manifeſt in the fleſh." Believe this, and believe all other. Therefore let us often have theſe ſweet and cheriſhing thoughts

of God in our flesh, that it may strengthen and feed, and nourish our faith, especially in the time of temptation.

Use II.—Again, from this, that God was manifest in our flesh; let us take heed that we defile not this flesh of ours, this nature of ours. What? is this flesh of mine taken into unity with the second person? is this flesh of mine now in heaven, sitting at the right hand of God? and shall I defile this flesh of mine, that I profess to be a member of Christ? shall I make it the member of an harlot? shall I abuse it as intemperate persons do? let us honour our nature, which Christ has so honoured; and let us take a holy kind of state upon us, to think ourselves too good (since God hath so advanced our nature) to abase it to the service of sin.

Use III.—Likewise it should teach us to stoop to any service of Christ, or our brethren. What? did the love of God draw him into the womb of the virgin? did it draw him to take my nature and flesh on him? and shall I think much to be serviceable to my poor brethren, for whom God was made flesh; and not only so, but was crucified? these thoughts will take down such proud conceits as enter into our hearts, when we are about any work of charity for the members of Christ. Shall I have base conceits of any man, whose flesh Christ hath taken? especially when I see any goodness in him, let me abase myself to any work of charity.

Take heed of pride: God himself emptied himself, and wilt thou be full of pride? He became of "no reputation," and wilt thou stand upon terms of credit? He "took upon him the form of a servant," and wilt thou be altogether a lord and king in thy affections, and not serve thy brethren? Did Christ do this, that thou shouldst be a proud person? He came to expiate thy pride: away with thy proud conceits. If thou be too proud to follow and imitate humble men, yet think not thyself too good to imitate an humble God. There is no spirit more opposite to the spirit of a Christian, than a spirit swelling and lift up, that thinks itself too good to be abased in the service of others, that carries itself loftily. A proud spirit is most opposite to the spirit of God, that became man to expiate this pride of ours, and to work our salvation in this flesh of ours. Of all sins, let us take heed of this diabolical satanical sin; let us be abased for Christ, who was abased for us: and as he left his heaven, to do us good, he left heaven itself; so let us, if we have a conceited heaven, and happiness in ourselves, leave it; and become base and low, to do any good

good we can. Shall he ſtoop, and bend to us from heaven to earth, and conceal his majeſty, not to be known to be as he was; and ſhall not we ſtoop one to another, to do good, and come down from our conceited excellency?

Uſe IV.—Here we have a ground likewiſe, not to envy the bleſſed Angels their greatneſs; nay, here we have that, wherein we are above the Angels themſelves: for he took not upon him the nature of Angels, but he was God manifeſt in our fleſh. Chriſt married our nature to himſelf, out of his love, that he might marry us to himſelf by his ſpirit; and now, by our union with Chriſt, we be nearer to him than the very Angels are. The Angels are not the Spouſe of Chriſt; but now, by reaſon of his taking our nature, we are a-kin to Chriſt: he is bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh; and we are bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh. We are the body, Chriſt is the head. We are nearer to Chriſt, than the very Angels. No wonder then, if thoſe bleſſed Spirits daily pry into this great myſtery.

Laſtly, let us labour that Chriſt may be manifeſted in our particular fleſh, in our perſons. As he was God manifeſt in the fleſh, in regard of that bleſſed maſs he took upon him; ſo we ſhould every one labour to have God manifeſt in our fleſh.

Queſt.—How is that?

Ans.—We muſt have Chriſt (as it were born in us) formed in us, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks. Certainly the ſame ſpirit that ſanctified Chriſt, doth ſanctify every member of Chriſt; and Chriſt is in ſome ſort begotten, and conceived, and manifeſted, in every one that is a Chriſtian. We muſt labour, that Chriſt may be manifeſt in our underſtandings, in our affections; that he may be manifeſt to us, and conceived (as it were) in us, as S. Paul's phraſe is, "that the life of Chriſt may be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh:" the life and ſpirit of Chriſt muſt be manifeſt in every true Chriſtian; and their fleſh muſt be ſanctified by the ſame ſpirit that Chriſt's fleſh was ſanctified withal. As Chriſt's fleſh was firſt ſanctified and then abaſed, and then glorious: ſo the fleſh of every Chriſtian muſt be content to be abaſed, as the fleſh of Chriſt was to ſerve Christ, to be conformable to Chriſt in our abaſed fleſh. And let us not make too much of this fleſh of ours, that ſhall turn to rottenneſs ere long; it muſt be gracious ſanctified fleſh, as Christ's was, and then glorious fleſh. Christ must be manifeſt in our flesh, as he was in his own; that when a man ſees a Chriſtian, he may ſee Chriſt manifeſt in him.

Object.—But how ſhall I come to have Chriſt manifeſt in my flesh? my heart is not fit to conceive Chriſt in; there is nothing in it, but deadneſs and darkneſs, and dulneſs, and rebellion.

Anſ.—Even as the Virgin Mary, she conceived Chriſt, when she yielded her aſſent: when the Angel ſpake to her, what ſaith she presently? "be it as thou hast said"; let it be even ſo: she yielded her aſſent to the promiſe, that she should conceive a Son. So when the promiſes are uttered to us, of the forgiveneſs of ſins, of ſalvation by Chriſt; as ſoon as ever we have a ſpirit of faith to yield our aſſent to; let it be ſo, Lord, as thou hast promiſed: thou hast promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins; let it be ſo: thou hast promiſed favour in Chriſt, let it be ſo. As ſoon as the heart is brought to yield to the gracious promiſe, then Chriſt is conceived in the heart. Even as Chriſt was conceived in the womb of the Virgin, when she yielded her aſſent to believe the promiſe; ſo Chriſt is in every man's heart, to ſanctify it, to rule it, to comfort it, as ſoon as this conſent is wrought: we ſhould labour therefore, to bring our hearts to this. So much for this. Becauſe it is of great consequence, and the leading myſtery to all that follows, I have been ſomewhat the longer in unfolding theſe words, "God manifeſt in the fleſh."

Juſtified in the Spirit.— Theſe words are added, to anſwer an objection that may riſe from the former: He was God manifeſt in the fleſh, he veiled himſelf, elſe he could not have ſuffered; when he took upon him to be the Mediator, he muſt do it in abaſed fleſh: if Chriſt (being God) had not abaſed himſelf, he ſhould never have been put to death; Satan and his inſtruments would never have meddled with him: he was not generally thought to be what he was indeed; he appeared to be nothing but a poor man, a debaſed dejected man; a perſecuted, ſlandered, diſgraced man in the world: he was thought to be a treſpaſſer.

It is no matter what he appeared, when he was veiled with our fleſh; he was juſtified in the ſpirit, to be the true Meſſias; to be God, as well as man.

Juſtified.— It implies two things, in the phraſe of Scripture: a freedom, and clearing from falſe conceits, and imputations; and declared to be truly what he was; to be otherwiſe than he was thought to be, of the wicked world. When a man is cleared from that which is laid to his charge, he is juſtified; when a man is declared to be that he is, then he is ſaid to be juſtified in the ſenſe of the ſcriptures: Wiſdom is juſtified of her children; that is,

cleared

cleared from the imputations that are laid upon religion, to be mopish and foolish: wisdom is justified, that is, cleared; and declared to be an excellent thing, by all her children. So Christ was justified, he was cleared, not to be as they took him; and declared himself to be as he manifested himself, a more excellent person; the Son of God, the true Messias, and Saviour of the World.

In the Spirit.—That is, in his God-head: that did shew itself in his life and death, in his resurrection and ascension; the beams of his God-head did sparkle out; though he were God in the flesh, yet he remained God still, and was justified to be so in the Spirit, that is, in his divine power, which is called the Spirit, because the spirit is the quintessence and strength of it. God hath the name of Spirit, from his purity, and power, and vigour. So God is a Spirit, that is, God is pure, opposite to gross things, earth and flesh; and God is powerful and strong. The horses of the Egyptians are flesh, not spirit; that is, they are weak, a Spirit is strong; so much spirit, so much strength. So, by the purity and strength of the divine nature, Christ discovered himself to be the true God, as well as true man.

The word Spirit is taken in three senses especially in the Gospel.

I.—It is taken for the whole nature of God: "God is a Spirit," saith Christ to the woman of Samaria; the very nature of God is a Spirit; that is, active and subtile; opposite to meanness, and weakness.

II.—Then again, Spirit is taken more particularly for the divine nature of Christ, as it is Rom. 1. 4. "Of the Seed of David according to the flesh, but declared mightily to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of sanctification, or holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The opposition shews that spirit is taken there for the divine nature of Christ. He had spoken in the verse before, concerning his human nature, he was made of the Seed of David, according to the flesh; and it follows, declared to be the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. And so likewise, in 1 Pet. 3. 18. "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit:" he was put to death in his human nature, but quickened and raised, as he was God.

III.—The Spirit is taken likewise for the third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit: and indeed, whatsoever

God the Father, or God the Son doth graciously to man, it is done by the Spirit: For, as the holy Spirit is in the order of the persons, so he is in the order of working; the Father works from himself, the Son works from the Father, the holy Spirit from them both; the holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, as a common principle: Therefore, sometimes the Father is said to raise Christ's body, by his Spirit; Christ is said to do things by the Spirit. Here, in this place, it is especially to be understood of Christ's divine nature, not excluding the Holy Ghost: For, as the Holy Ghost, in the incarnation, sanctified his flesh, the second Person took flesh, but the third Person sanctified it; so, in the resurrection of Christ, it was the second person that raised itself up, but yet it was by the Holy Ghost too. So, when there is mention here of Christ justified by the Spirit, that is, by his Godhead, and by the Holy Ghost, which he always used, not as an instrument, for the Holy Ghost is a common principle with himself, one with himself, of equal dignity, only differing in the order of Persons: whatsoever Christ did, he did with the Spirit, that must not be excluded. Christ was as well justified in the Spirit, as God, as manifest in our nature to be man.

And this was in the time of his abasement: in the greatest extremity of abasement, there was somewhat that came from Christ, to justify that he was the Son of God, the true Messias; there is no part of his abasement but some beams of his Godhead did break forth in it.

He was made of flesh; but he took upon him the flesh of a virgin: Could that be otherwise than by the Spirit, to be born of a virgin, she remaining a virgin? When he was born, he was laid in a manger; indeed, there was God in the low estate of the flesh: ay, but the wise men worshipped him, and the star directed them; there he was justified in the Spirit. He was toiled when he was asleep in the ship, but he commanded the winds and the waves: He wanted money to pay tribute, as he was abased; but to fetch it out of a fish, there he was justified, the one was an argument of his poverty and meanness; but the other was an argument that he was another manner of person than the world took him for; that he had all the creatures at his command. He was apprehended as a malefactor, but he struck them all down with his word, "Whom seek ye?"

Come to the greatest abasement of all. When he was on the cross

croſs, he hung between two thieves; ay, but he converted one of them. When the thief had ſo much diſcouragement, to ſee his Saviour hang on the croſs; yet he ſhewed ſuch power in that abaſement, that the very thief could ſee him to be a king, and was converted by his Spirit. He did hang upon the croſs; but at the ſame time there was an eclipſe, the whole world was darkened, the earth trembled, the rocks brake; the centurion juſtified him; "Doubtleſs this was the Son of God." He was ſold for thirty pence; but he that was ſold for thirty pieces, did redeem the whole world by his blood.

Nay, at the loweſt degree of abaſement of all, when he ſtruggled with the wrath of God, and was beſet with devils; then he triumphed: when he was viſibly overcome, then inviſibly he overcame: he was an inviſible conqueror, when he was viſibly ſubdued: For, did he not on the croſs ſatisfy the wrath of God, free us from it, and from Satan, God's goaler, and reconcile us by his blood? The chief works of all were wrought in his chief abaſement. At length he died, and was buried; ay, but he that died roſe again gloriouſly: therefore he was mightily declared to be the Son of God, by raiſing himſelf from the dead: That was the greateſt abaſement, when he lay in the grave; and eſpecially then he was juſtified, by his reſurrection from the dead, and his aſcenſion, in his ſtate of glorification eſpecially. So, if we go from Chriſt's birth, to his loweſt degree of abaſement, there was always ſome manifeſtation of his juſtification by the Spirit.

He was juſtified in a double regard.—

I. In regard of God, he was juſtified, and cleared from our ſins that he took upon him: He bore our ſins upon the tree, and bore them away, that they ſhould never appear again to our diſcomfort. He was made a curſe for us. How came Chriſt to be cleared of our ſins that lay upon him? When by the Spirit, by his divine nature, he raiſed himſelf from the dead; ſo he was juſtified from that which God laid upon him, for he was our ſurety: Now, the Spirit raiſing him from the dead, ſhewed that the debt was fully diſcharged, becauſe our ſurety was out of priſon. All things are firſt in Chriſt, and then in us; he was acquitted and juſtified from our ſins, and then we.

II. And then he was juſtified, by the Spirit, from all imputations of men, from the miſ-conceits that the world had of him; they thought him to be a mere man, or a ſinful man. No; he

was more than a mere man; nay, more than a holy man; he was God-man. Whence were his miracles; were they not from his divine power? He overcame the devil, in his temptations: Who can overcome the devil but he that is the Son of God? He caſt out the devils, and diſpoſſeſſed them with his word. All the enemies of Chriſt that ever were, at length he conquered them; and ſo declared himſelf mightily to be (as he was) the Son of God. He healed the outward man, and the inward man, by his divine power; he cauſed the ſpiritual as well as the bodily eyes to ſee, the dead to live, and the lame to go, &c. Whatſoever he did in the body he did in the ſoul likewiſe; in thoſe excellent miracles he was juſtified, and declared to be the Son of God, eſpecially in his reſurrection and aſcenſion, and daily converting of ſouls by his miniſtry; all being done by his Spirit, which is his vicar in the world, ruling his Church, and ſubduing his enemies; ſo that he was every way juſtified in the Spirit, to be God, to be the true Meſſias propheſied of, and promiſed to the church. Therefore he was juſtified in his truth, that all the promiſes were true of him; and in his faithfulneſs, that he was faithful in performing the promiſes he made; he was juſtified in his goodneſs, and mercy, and all thoſe attributes; he was juſtified in the Spirit.

But you will ſay, it ſeems he was not juſtified in the Spirit: There are many heretics, that think not Chriſt to be God, that take not Chriſt to be ſo glorious as he is.

I anſwer; when we ſpeak of the juſtifying of Chriſt, it is meant to thoſe that have eyes to ſee him, to thoſe that ſhut not their eyes; he was juſtified to be ſo great as he was to thoſe "whoſe eyes the god of the world had not blinded," to all that were his: as it is excellently ſet down, John i. 14. "The word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." We beheld his glory; we did, others did not take notice; but they were thoſe whoſe eyes the god of this world hath blinded, the malicious Scribes and Phariſees, that ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and would never acknowledge Chriſt; and ignorant people, that had not faith nor the Spirit of God. He was juſtified by the Spirit of God, to all that had ſpiritual eyes to ſee and take notice of his courſe; as St. John ſaith in one of his Epiſtles, "What we have ſeen and heard, and our hands have handled, of the word of life, that we declare to you:" So, that he was God manifeſt in the fleſh, and

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he shewed himself to be the word of life, to those that were his apostles and disciples, and those that were converted by him. As we see St. Peter, when he had felt his divine power upon his heart, by his preaching, "Lord (saith he) thou hast the words of eternal life, whither shall we go?" He felt the Spirit in his preaching; and so, in another place, St. Peter, in Matth. xvi. he confessed him to be "the Son of the living God." You see to whom he was justified and declared to be the true Messias, to be God as well as man, by his Spirit.

The reason why he justified himself to be so, it was the more to strengthen our faith; all his miracles, were but so many sparkles of his divine nature, so many expressions of his divine power. And after he was raised from the dead, at his ascension, and sending of the Holy Ghost, he shewed his divine power more gloriously, and all to strengthen the faith of the elect, and to stop the mouths of all impudent rebellious persons: For, considering that he wrought such miracles, that he raised men from the dead, and raised himself; considering that he called the Gentiles, and converted the world, by the ministry of weak men, he shewed that he was more than a man. Well, to make some use this, of that Christ was

Justified in the Spirit.

Use I. Christ will at length justify himself; this is a ground of faith. However he be now as a sign set up, that many speak against, and contradict; yet the time will come, when he will gloriously justify himself to all the world. Now some shut their eyes willingly, and the enemies of Christ seem to flourish; yet Christ will be justified by his Spirit to all his elect, in every age, especially in the resurrection. For, when he shall come and appear to be glorious in his saints, it will appear who he is indeed. Now he suffers many to tread upon his church, and he suffers many heretics to deny him, sometimes in one nature, sometimes in another, and so to offend against him; but the time will come, that he will trample all his enemies under his feet; he will be justified by his spirit, that is our comfort. There are many schismatics, and heretics, and persecutors; but Christ will be justified at length, the kingdoms of the earth will be the Lord Jesus Christ's. Are they not now so? They are; but truly they appear not to be so; but, at length they will appear to be so. At the conversion of the Jews, and the confusion of antichrist, then it will appear more and more, that he

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is king of the world indeed. Now (as it were) his offices are darkened; his kingly office is darkened, and his prophetical office is darkened; but at length it will appear, that he is king of the church, and all kingdoms will be Christ's. There are glorious times coming, especially the glorious day of the Resurrection; Christ at length will be cleared, he will be justified. The sun, at length, will scatter all his clouds. In the morning they gather about the sun, as if they would cover it; but the sun breaks through all, and gloriously appears at length: so Christ will scatter all clouds, and gloriously appear to be that which the word sets him forth to be.

Again, as Christ will justify himself, so he will justify his church and children, first or last, by his spirit. His children are now accounted the off-scouring of the world, they are trampled and trod upon, they are the objects of scorn and hatred; and who accounted so base? Will Christ endure this? No: he that justified himself, that is, that declared himself, and will more and more declare himself to be as he is; will he not justify his church, his mystical body, to be as they are indeed? Certainly, it shall appear to the world, that he will justify them to be kings and priests, to be heirs, to be glorious, to be so near and dear to him, as the Scripture sets them forth to be. Whatsoever the Scripture hath spoken of the saints and children of God, the time will come, that all this shall be justified and made good by that Spirit of Christ, whereby he made good whatsoever he had said of himself.

Therefore, in our eclipses and disgraces, let us all comfort ourselves in this; let the world esteem us for the present, as the refuse of the world, as persons not worthy to be acquainted with, not worthy to be regarded; we shall be justified, and cleared, and glorified, especially at that day, when Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints. There is a hidden life of the church, and every Christian; they have a life in Christ, but that life is hid in Christ, in heaven. As the flowers in winter, they have a life, but it is hidden in the root. When Christ shall appear, as the blessed St. Paul and St John say, then it shall appear who we are: Then our glorious life, that now is in our head, shall appear; then we shall be as glorious as the Scripture sets us forth to be; the church shall be glorious within and without too, at that day. Therefore, let us comfort ourselves; this hidden life, though it appear not now, yet we shall be justified. And hence we may answer some objections likewise.

Some

Some may say, how doth it appear, that Christ is king of the church? We see how the church is trampled on at this day. Where is the life and glory of the church? What! his spouse, and thus used? What! his turtle, and thus pulled and plucked by the birds of prey?

I answer: Look with other spectacles, with the eye of faith, and then you shall see a spring in the winter of the church; however she be now abased and eclipsed, yet she shall be justified; and it will appear, that Christ regards his church, and people, and children, more than all the world besides; only, there must be a conformity.

It was fit there should be a time of Christ's abasement; how should he have suffered else? the world would never have crucified God, they could not have done it. Therefore he was abased, he veiled his Godhead under his manhood, under a base condition; so he passed through suffering to glory. So it must be in the body of Christ; it must pass through the veil of infirmities, of weakness, affliction, and disgrace: How else should it be conformable to Christ? If Christ had justified himself at all times, in his humiliation he could not have suffered: if we should be justified now, and appear to all the world who we are, who would persecute us, how could we be conformable to Christ? Therefore, let us quietly and meekly awhile endure these things, that are nothing but to conform us to our Head; knowing this, that as he was justified by little and little, till he was perfectly justified, when he was raised from the dead; so we shall be perfectly justified and freed from all imputations at the last day, when, by the same Spirit that raised him, we shall be raised up too.

Nay, in this world, when it is for his glory, and for our good, he will bring our righteousness to light as the noon-day, he will free us from the imputations that the world lays on us, he will have a care of our credit. For, as Christ was mightily declared to be the Son of God in a fit time, so shall we, when we are fit. Then the world shall see, that we are not the men that prophane, bitter, malicious persons, (led with the spirt of the devil) charged us to be.

Let us take no scandal at the present afflictions of the church. Christ will justify his mystical body, by his glorious power, in good time; Antichrist shall not always rule in the world: Christ will be justified to be the king and ruler of the world;

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all power is committed to him. But we see it not now: Antichrist rages in the world, and the church seems to be under hatches. So it is with particular Christians, those that belong to God, and indeed are truly such as they profess themselves to be (tho' with much weakness); we see in what respect and esteem they are had. Let us comfort ourselves, beloved: Christ justified himself by his spirit, and will he not justify his poor church, and free it from the tyranny of antichrist? Will he not advance those that are trodden on now, and made as the dirt in the street, that they shall shine as the sun? Therefore, when you hear of the dejected state of the churches abroad, be not dismayed: Consider there is a glorious king that rules the world, and he will make it appear ere long, he will justify himself, and his church; for, he suffers in his church: He is wise, he sees cause to do this; he is working his own work: he corrects, and rules, and purgeth his church in the furnace of affliction; but be sure the time will come, that he will bring the cause of religion to light, and he will shew what side he owns; he will justify his truth, and tread satan and all his members under feet; this frame of things will not hold long. As verily as Christ is in heaven, as verily he is justified in his own person by his Spirit, by his divine power; so he will justify his mystical body: and as he hath conquered in his own person, so he will by his Spirit conquer for his church.

Use I.—And as he will overcome for his church, so he will overcome in his church; stronger is he that is in the church in you, than he that is in the world; and God's children will be triumphant: though they may be discouraged, in respect of the present carriage of things; yet the Spirit that is in them, above the world, will gather strength by little and little, and it will appear at length, notwithstanding present discouragements: undoubtedly the best things will have a true lustre and glory at length, however they seem to be carried for the present: You see as Christ has justified himself to be the true Messias, and as he hath justified himself, so he will justify all his; there is the same reason for both.

For our further instruction and comfort, let us consider, that in regard of God likewise, we shall be justified from our sins in our consciences here and at the day of judgement, before angels, and devils, and men. As Christ was justified from our sins himself, and he will justify every one of us by his Spirit; his Spirit shall witness to our souls, that we are justified; and likewise

likewiſe his Spirit ſhall declare it at the day of judgment; it ſhall be openly declared, that we are ſo indeed. There is a double degree of juſtification, one in our conſcience now, and another at the day of judgment. Then it ſhall appear, that we have believed in Chriſt, and are cleanſed from our ſins, when we ſhall ſtand on the right hand of Chriſt, as all that cleave to Chriſt by faith: then it ſhall appear, that by him we are juſtified from all our ſins whatſoever.

Again, Chriſt was juſtified in the Spirit. Then hence we may learn our duty, we ought all to juſtify Chriſt. To whom is Chriſt juſtified by the Spirit? only to his own church, and children, not to the reprobate world. We may know, that we are members of Chriſt, if we be of the number of thoſe that juſtify Chriſt.

Queſt. How do we juſtify Chriſt?

Anſ. We juſtify Chriſt, when from an inward work of the Spirit we feel and acknowledge him to be ſuch an one as he is; Chriſt is God. Now, when we rely upon him as our rock, in all temptations, we juſtify Chriſt to be ſo; when we kiſs the Son with the kiſſes of faith, of ſubjection, of obedience, of reverence and love; this is to juſtify Chriſt to be the Son of God, as it is Pſal. ii. "Kiſs the Son leſt he be angry." Thoſe that in temptation are to ſeek for their comfort, they do not juſtify Chriſt; they do not live as if he were a Saviour, nor as if he were a God; in temptations to deſpair, they juſtify not Chriſt.

II. Thoſe that have Chriſt illuminating their underſtandings, to conceive the myſteries of religion; they juſtify Chriſt to be the prophet of his church, becauſe they feel him enlightening their underſtandings.

III. Thoſe that find their conſciences pacified, by the obedience and ſacrifice of Chriſt, they juſtify him to be their prieſt; for they can oppoſe the blood of Chriſt ſprinkled on their hearts, to all the temptations of ſatan, and to the riſings of their own doubting conſcience; their hearts being ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, they can go to God, and the blood of Chriſt ſpeaks for them, peace; it pleads, mercy, mercy. Thus, we juſtify Chriſt as a prieſt, when we reſt in his ſacrifices, and do not, with papiſts, run to other ſacrifices; this is not to juſtify Chriſt: To juſtify Chriſt, God-man, is to make him a perfect mediator of interceſſion and redemption; to make him all in all.

They

They do not juſtify Chriſt, who think that God was made man to patch up a ſalvation; that he muſt do a part, and we muſt merit the reſt: Oh, no; take heed of that; account all our obedience, and all that is from us, as menſtruous cloths, not able to ſtand with the juſtice of God.

IV. In a word, we juſtify and declare, and make good that he is our king, and put a kingly crown on his head, when we ſuffer him to rule us, and to ſubdue our ſpirits, and our rebellions, when we cheriſh no contrary motions to his ſpirit; when we reſt in his word, and not traditions, but ſtoop to the ſceptre of Chriſt's word; this is to juſtify him as a king. Thus we ſhould labour to juſtify, and declare to the world the excellency and power of Chriſt in our hearts, that we may make religion lovely, and make it be entertained in the world, becauſe we ſhew it to be an excellent powerful thing. Let us examine our hearts, whether we thus juſtify Chriſt, or no; that by our carriage towards him, we make it good, that he is ſuch an one as the cripture ſets him forth to be.

In particular, we juſtify him, that he roſe from the dead, when we believe that we are freed from our ſins, our ſurety being out of priſon. We juſtify him as "aſcended into Heaven," when we have heavenly affections, and when we conſider him as a public perſon gone to heaven in our name. We juſtify him as "ſitting at the right hand of God," when we mind the things that are above, and not that are here below; or elſe we deny theſe things, we believe them not; we juſtify them not, when our converſations are not anſwerable to the things we believe. If we be the children of wiſdom, undoubtedly we ſhall juſtify wiſdom. If we be the members of Chriſt, we ſhall juſtify our head; if we be his ſpouſe, we ſhall juſtify our huſband. Let us examine ourſelves, that we do in this kind; and never think our ſtate good, till we can juſtify Chriſt.

In the next place, for our direction; as Chriſt juſtified himſelf by his Spirit, by his divine power; ſo, let us know, that it is our duty to juſtify ourſelves, to juſtify our profeſſion, juſtify all divine truth. Let us make it good that we are the ſons of God, that we are Chriſtians indeed, not only to have the name, but the anointing of Chriſt; that we may clear our religion from falſe imputations: or elſe, inſtead of juſtifying our profeſſion, we juſtify the ſlanders that are made againſt it. The world is ready to ſay, None are worſe than Chriſtians, and their reli-

religion is all but words, and ſhews, and forms. Shall we juſtify theſe ſlanders? No: let us, by the Spirit of God, juſtify our religion; let us ſhew that religion is a powerful thing, and ſo indeed it is: For, divine truth, when it is embraced and known, it alters and changeth the manners and diſpoſitions, it makes of lions, lambs; it makes our natures mild, and tractable, and ſweet; it raiſeth a man from earth to heaven. Let us juſtify this our religion and profeſſion, againſt all gainſayers whatſoever: Wiſdom is juſtified of all her children. Let us juſtify our religion and profeſſion, by maintaining it, and ſtanding for it, and expreſs in our lives and converſations the power of it.

Queſt.—How ſhall this be?

The text ſaith, by the Spirit: For, as Chriſt juſtified himſelf, that is, declared himſelf to be as he was, by his Spirit; ſo every Chriſtian hath the Spirit of Chriſt, or elſe he is none of his: and by this Spirit of Chriſt, he is able to juſtify his profeſſion; not only to juſtify Chriſt to be the true Head, &c. but all things he doth muſt be done by the Spirit, or not at all. For, as Chriſt when he became man, and was in the world, he did all by the direction of the Spirit; he was led into the wilderneſs by the Spirit; he taught by the Spirit; the Spirit that ſanctified him in the womb, guided him in all his life: ſo a Chriſtian is guided by the Spirit, God doth all to him by the ſpirit, he is comforted, and directed, and ſtrengthened by the ſpirit, and he again doth all to God by the ſpirit: he prays in the ſpirit, and ſighs and groans to God in the ſpirit, he walks in the ſpirit, he doth all by the Spirit. Therefore, by the ſpirit let us juſtify and declare ourſelves what we are; that there is ſomewhat in us above nature, that we have love above carnal men, and patience and meekneſs above the ability and capacity of other men: We juſtify our profeſſion, when we do ſomewhat more than nature, or when we do common ordinary things in a ſpiritual holy manner. Religion is not a matter of form, but of ſpirit: Let us ſhew our religion not only by word, but by the fruits of the ſpirit; by love, and mercy, meekneſs, and zeal, when occaſion ſerves. The whole life of a Chriſtian (as far as he is a Chriſtian) it gives evidence that he is a Chriſtian; the whole life of a carnal formal man, evidences that he is not a Chriſtion, becauſe he has nothing in him above other men: as our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, "What peculiar things do ye," to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from other men? So let us ask ourſelves.

We

We profeſs ourſelves to be the children of God, the heirs of heaven, "What peculiar thing do we?" How do we juſtify ourſelves? A true Chriſtian can anſwer, I can juſtify it by the ſpirit: I find I do things from other principles, and motives, and inducements, than the world doth, who only reſpect terms of civility, and aims of the world, or to content the clamour of conſcience; but I find, I do things out of aſſurance that I am the child of God, and in obedience to him. Let us ſee what peculiar thing we do.

Alas, I cannot but lament the poor profeſſion of many. How do they juſtify their profeſſion? How do they make good, that they have the ſpirit of God raiſing them above other men, when they live no better than pagans, (nay, not ſo well) under the profeſſion of the goſpel and religion? Would pagans live as many men do? Did they not keep their words better? Were they ſo looſe in their lives and converſations, and ſo licentious? Would they ſwear by their gods idly? Moſt of our ordinary people are worſe than pagans. Where is the juſtifying of religion? If Turks and heathens ſhould ſee them, they would ſay, You talk of religion, but where is the power of it? If you had the power of it, you would expreſs it more in your fidelity and honeſty, and mercy, and love, and ſobriety. The kingdom of God, that is, the manifeſtation of the government of Chriſt, is not in word, but in power. Therefore, let us labour to juſtify, that we are ſubjects of that kingdom, by the power of it.

Mere civil perſons, the Apoſtle ſaith of them, 2 Tim. iii. they are ſuch as "have a form of godlineſs, but deny the power of it." All that rabble that he names there, they have a form: A form is eaſy, but the power of it is not ſo eaſy. Therefore, let us juſtify our religion, by our converſation: Let us juſtify the ordinances of God, the preaching and hearing of the word of God, by reverence in hearing it, as the word of God; and labour to expreſs it in our lives and converſations; or elſe, we think it nothing but the ſpeech of man. Let us juſtify the ſacrament to be the ſeal of God, by coming reverently to it, and by finding our faith ſtrengthened by it. So labour to juſtify every ordinance of God, from ſome ſweet comforts that we feel by them; and then we ſhew, that we are true members of Chriſt, that we are like Chriſt, who juſtified himſelf in the ſpirit.

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Beloved, it is a great power that muſt make a true Chriſtian; no leſs than the power of the ſpirit that raiſed Chriſt from the dead: as it is, Epheſ. i. St. Paul prays, that they might "feel the power that raiſed Chriſt from the dead." It is no leſs power for Chriſt to ſhine in our dark hearts, than to make light to ſhine out of darkneſs.

Now, what power is in the lives of moſt men? The "power that raiſed Chriſt from the dead?" Certainly, no. What power is there in hearing the word, when many are ſo full of prophaneneſs, that they altogether neglect it? What power is there, now and then, to ſpeak a good word, or now and then, to do a ſlight action? Is this the power that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, when, by the ſtrength of nature, men can do it? There muſt be ſomewhat above nature, to juſtify a ſound ſpiritual Chriſtian: We muſt have ſomething to ſhew, that we have our ſpirits raiſed up by the ſpirit of Chriſt, to juſtify our profeſſion, in all eſtates: In proſperity, to ſhew that we have a ſpirit above proſperity, that we are not proud of it: Then, in adverſity, then we juſtify that we are chriſtians, by a ſpirit that is above adverſity; that we do not ſink under it as a mere natural man would do; when we have learned St. Paul's leſſon, "in all eſtates to be content." In temptation, we juſtify our chriſtian profeſſion, by arming ourſelves with a ſpirit of faith, to beat back the fiery darts of ſatan. When all things ſeem contrary, let us caſt ourſelves, by a ſpirit of faith, upon Chriſt; it argues a powerful work of the ſpirit, when we can, in contraries, believe contraries.

Thus, let us ſhew, that we are chriſtians; that we have ſomewhat in us above nature; that when the courſe of nature ſeems to be contrary, yet we can look with the eye of faith through all diſcouragements, and clouds, and can ſee God reconciled in Chriſt—that will juſtify us to be found chriſtians. Therefore let us labour, not only for ſlight outward performances, that are eaſy for any to do, but by an inward frame of ſoul, and by a carriage and converſation becoming our profeſſion; that we may walk worthy of our profeſſion, fruitfully and watchfully, carefully and ſoberly, as becometh chriſtians. So much for that. I proceed to the next words,

Seen of Angels.

The word is not altogether ſo fitly tranſlated: For, it is more

pregnant than it is here rendered. "He was ſeen," it is true; but he was ſeen with the admiration and wonder of angels: he was ſeen as ſuch an object preſented to them ſhould be ſeen, and ſeen with wonder; it implies the conſequence of ſight: ſight ſtirs up affection, it ſtirs up the whole ſoul; therefore it is put for all the reſt.

I. They ſaw him with wonder: For, was it not a wonder, that God ſhould ſtoop ſo low, as to be ſhut up in the ſtraits of a virgin's womb? that Chriſt ſhould humble himſelf ſo low, to be God in our fleſh? Was not here exceeding wondrous love and mercy to mankind, to wretched man, having paſſed by the glorious angels that were fallen? and exceeding wiſdom in God, in ſatisfying his juſtice, that he might ſhew mercy? It was matter of admiration to the angels, to ſee the great God ſtoop ſo low, to be clothed in ſuch a poor nature as man's, that is meaner than their own. This doubtleſs is the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt, they ſaw it with admiration.

II. And becauſe he was their head, as the ſecond perſon, and they were creatures to attend upon Chriſt; their ſight and wonder muſt tend to ſome practice, ſuitable to their condition: Therefore they ſo ſee and wondered at him, as that they attended upon Chriſt in all the paſſages of his humiliation, and exaltation; in his life, in his death, in his reſurrection and aſcenſion.

III. They ſaw him ſo, as they were witneſſes of him to men; they gave teſtimony and witneſs of him: ſo that it is a full word, in the intention of the Holy Ghoſt. Indeed, not only the angels, but all gave witneſs of him, from the higheſt heavens to hell itſelf; all witneſſed Chriſt to be the true Meſſias.

In his baptiſm, there was the Trinity; the Father, "in a voice from heaven;" the Holy Ghoſt, "in the ſhape of a dove." He had the witneſs of angels, of men of all ranks, Jews and Gentiles, men and women; yea, the devils themſelves oft-times confeſſed him in the goſpel. He was witneſſed of all ranks; they ſaw him, and gave evidence and teſtimony of him, that he was the true Meſſias: he was "ſeen of angels."

To declare this a little more particularly.—

The angels knew of Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, before it was: for, what the church knew, the angels knew, in ſome meaſure

meaſure. When God made the promiſe of the promiſed ſeed, the angels knew of it. And in Daniel, the angel ſpeaks of the "ſeventy weeks:" therefore, before his incarnation they knew of him. But now they ſaw him with wonder in our fleſh, now they had an experimental knowledge of him: For, the angels, beſides their natural and ſupernatural knowledge, they have an experimental knowledge that is daily increaſed in them, in the Church; they ſee ſomewhat to admire continually, in the church, in the Head, and in the members. They knew of the incarnation of Chriſt before: you know the angel brought the news of it before-hand to the Virgin Mary. The angels attended upon Chriſt from his very infancy; the angels miniſtered to him, in his temptation; before his death, they comforted him in the garden: he was made lower than the angels (in ſome ſort), as it is in Pſal. viii. for they came to "comfort him;" he was ſo low, that he had the comforting of angels, Then they ſaw when he was buried, they "rolled away the ſtone."

By the way, in general, it is the angels' office to remove impediments that hinder us from Chriſt. A chriſtian ſhall have angels to remove the ſtones, the hindrances that are between heaven and him, rather than they ſhall be any impediment to his ſalvation.

Then, when he roſe, there were angels, one at the head, and another at the feet; and they told Mary, that he was riſen. And then at his aſcenſion, the angels told the diſciples, that Chriſt ſhould come again. You have the hiſtory of it at large in the goſpel; how, from the annunciation of his conception, to his aſcenſion, they ſaw him, and attended on him, and witneſſed of him.

As ſoon as ever he was born, when they appeared to the ſhepherd, what a glorious hymn they ſang? "Glory to God on high, peace on earth, good will to men." How joyful were they of the incarnation of Chriſt, and the great work of redemption wrought thereby?

And, as I ſaid, they did not only ſee theſe things, but they wondered at the love, and mercy, and wiſdom of God, in the Head and members of the church; as we ſee in divers places—in 1 Pet. i. 12. "We preach the goſpel, which things the angels deſire to look into:" The very angels deſire to pry and look with admiration into the wondrous things of the goſpel. So in Epheſ. iii. 10. "To the intent that principalities and powers, in

heavenly places, might be made known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God." There is ſomewhat done by Chriſt, by his incarnation and reſurrection, and government of his church, that the very angels look into, and wonder at the manifold wiſdom of God, in governing his church; his wiſdom in electing them; and after, in reſtoring mankind: And in his manner of diſpenſation to the Jews; firſt, by ceremonies; and then after, by the body itſelf, Chriſt in the fleſh. There is ſuch a world of wonders in the government of the church, ſuch manifold wiſdom, that the very angels themſelves look upon this with admiration and wonder, and with great delight.

Shall angels ſee and wonder at theſe things? At the love and mercy, and wiſdom of God, in governing his church, in joining together things irreconcilable, (to man's apprehenſion), infinite juſtice with infinite mercy in Chriſt, that God's wrath and juſtice ſhould be ſatisfied in Chriſt, and thereby infinite mercy ſhewed to us. Here are things for angels to wonder at. Shall they wonder at it, and joy delight in it; and ſhall we ſlight theſe things that are the wonder of angels? There are a company of prophane ſpirits, (I would they were not too many among us), that will ſcarcely vouchſafe to look into theſe things, that have ſcarcely the book of God in their houſes. They can wonder at a ſtory, or a poem, or ſome frothy device; at baſe things, not worthy to be reckoned of. But, as for the great myſteries of ſalvation, that great work of the trinity, about the ſalvation of mankind, thby tuſh at them, they ſlight them; they never talk ſeriously of theſe things, except it be (as it were) with a graceleſs grace, of ſlighting and ſcorn: they account it a diſparagement to be ſerious in theſe things; they make no myſteries of that which the glorious creatures the angels themſelves, look upon and pry into, even with admiration. But it is not to be conceived of, the prophaneneſs and poiſon, that is in man's nature againſt divine truths, (as I ſhall ſhew afterwards), how it ſlights the means of its own ſalvation, and ſtands wondering at baubles and trifles: and ſo men waſte away their precious time, in admiration of that which is nothing but "vanity of vanities;" whereas, we ſhould take up our time in ſtudying theſe tranſcendant things, that go beyond the capacity of the very angels; yet theſe things we dally and trifle withall.

Again, from hence, that Chriſt was ſeen, and attended on, and admired by angels, there is a great deal of comfort iſſueth to us—it is the ground of all the attendance and comfort that

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we have from the angels: For, this is a rule in divinity, that there is the same reason of the head, and of the members—both head and members are one: Therefore, what comfort and attendance Christ had, who is the head, the church, which is his body, has the same, only with some difference—they attended upon him, as the head; they attend upon us, as the members—they attended upon him immediately for himself; they attend upon us, for his sake. For, whatsoever we have of God, we have it at second hand; we receive grace for grace of Christ: we receive attendance of angels, for the attendance they yielded to Christ first; they attend upon us, by his direction, and commission and charge from him: so we have a derivative comfort, from the attendance of angels upon Christ: but, surely, whatsoever they did to him, they do to us, because there is the same respect to head and members. Therefore, the devil did not mistake; he was right in that, when he alledged out of the Psalm, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone." He was right in that, applying it to Christ: For, however it be true to christians, yet it is true to Christ too—it is true to the members, as well as the head; and to the head as to the members: for, "he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all one," as the apostle saith, "one Christ."

Now, the care of angels concerning Christ and his Church, it was shadowed out in Exod. xxv. and xxvi. There, the mercy-seat, which covered the ark wherein the law was; upon the mercy-seat there were two cherubims counterviewing one another, and both pryed to the mercy-seat—they shadowed out the angels that look on the mercy-seat, Christ: for he is the mercy-seat that covers the law; and the curse, in whom God was merciful to us. There they look upon that with a kind of wonder, and attendance, which St. Peter alludes unto, in that place, "Into which mysteries the very angels pry." And so in the veil of the tabernacle, the veil had round about it pictures of cherubims. What did that shadow out unto us? The multitude of cherubims, and seraphims, and angels, that attended upon Christ, and his church. So he was seen, and attended on by angels; and it belongs to all that are his: as you have it, Heb. i. "They are ministering spirits, for the good of the heirs of salvation." They that serve the king, serve the queen too—Christ is the king of his church, and the church is the greatest queen in the world; they attend upon her; nay, Christ hath

made us, with himſelf, kings. Now, what a king is that, who hath a guard of angels? As they guarded and attended upon Chriſt, ſo they guard and attend all that are his: as you have it excellently in Dan. vii. 10. "There are thouſand thouſands of angels about the throne continually." All this is for our comfort, becauſe we are one myſtical body with him.

You have, in "Jacob's ladder," a notable repreſentation of this. Jacob's ladder, it reached from earth to heaven; and that pointed to Chriſt himſelf, who is Emanuel, God and man, who brought God and man together. He was a mediator between both, and a friend to both. He was that ladder which touched heaven and earth, and joined both together. Now, it is ſaid, the angels aſcended and deſcended upon that ladder: ſo the angels deſcending upon us, is, becauſe they aſcend and deſcend upon Jacob's ladder firſt; that is, upon Chriſt. "All things are yours," (ſaith the apoſtle:) What be thoſe? God is ours, the ſpirit is ours, heaven is ours, the earth is ours; afflictions, life, death, Paul, Apollo, the angels themſelves—all is ours: Why? Ye are Chriſt's—that is the ground. So, it is a ſpring of comfort to conſider, that Chriſt was ſeen, and admired and attended by angels—they are ours, becauſe we are Chriſt's. Let us conſider, what a comfort it is, to have the attendance of theſe bleſſed ſpirits for Chriſt's ſake.

And hence, we have the ground of the perpetuity of it, that they will for ever be attendants to us; becauſe their love and reſpect to us, is founded upon their love and reſpect to Chriſt. When favour to another, is grounded upon a ſound foundation: when the favour that a king or a great perſon bears to one, is founded in the love of his own ſon, he loves the other, becauſe he loves his ſon, whom the other loves; ſo it is perpetual and ſound, becauſe he will ever love his ſon. The angels will for ever love, and honour, and attend us: Why? for what ground have they reſpect for us at all? It is in Chriſt, whoſe members and ſpouſe we are. So long as the church hath any relation to Chriſt, ſo long the angels ſhall reſpect the church: but the church hath relation to Chriſt for ever; therefore, the reſpect that the bleſſed angels have to Chriſt and to the church, it is for ever, and for ever.

Well, let us think of this ſo, as to make uſe of it, that now in Chriſt, we have the attendance of angels. We do not ſee them, as in former time, before Chriſt's incarnation, it is true: becauſe now, ſince Chriſt is come in the fleſh, the government of

of Christ is spiritual, and we are not supported with those glorious manifestations, but they are about us in an invisible manner. We have Elizeus guard about us continually, but we see them not. There were more apparitions in the infancy of the church, because the dispensation of Christ, was according to the weak state of the church. But now Christ is come in the flesh, and received up in glory, there is more abundance of spirit. We should be more spiritual and heavenly minded, and not look for outward apparitions of angels; but be content that we have a guard of them about us, as every Christian hath. "Despise not (saith Christ,) these little ones;" they are about christian and about little ones, little in years, and little in esteem; "for their angels," &c. It is a strange thing, they are God's angels, but they are theirs, for their service: "Their angels behold the face of your heavenly Father." So that Christ's angels are our angels—they are angels even of children, of little ones. Nay, let a man be ever so poor, even as Lazarus, he shall have the attendance of angels, in life and death. There is no Christian of low degree, of the lowest degree, that shall think himself neglected of God; for the very angels attend him, as we see in Lazarus: there is a general commission for the least, the little ones.

b. Likewise, it may comfort us in all our extremities whatsoever, in all our defections. The time may come, beloved, that we may be deserted of the world, and deserted of our friends: we may be in such straits, as we may have nobody in the world near us. Oh, but if a man be a true christian, he hath God and angels about him always. A christian is a king, he is never without his guard, that invisible guard of angels. What if a man have nobody by him when he dies, but God and his good angel to carry his soul to heaven? is he neglected. Every christian, if he hath none else with him, he hath God, the whole Trinity, and the guard of angels, to help and comfort him, and to convey his soul to the place of happiness. Therefore, let us never despair, let us never be disconsolate; whatsoever our condition be, we shall have God and good angels with us in all our straits and extremities. Go through all the passages of our life, we see how ready we are to fall into dangers. In our infancy, in our tender years, we are committed to their custody: afterwards, in our dangers, they pitch their tents about us: as it is in Psal. xxxiv. "The angels of the Lord pitch their tent about those that fear the Lord." In our conversions they rejoice—"There

is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner." At the hour of death, (as we see in Lazarus) they are ready to convey our souls to the place of happiness. Lazarus' soul was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. At the resurrection, they shall gather our dead bodies together, it is the office of the angels. In heaven, they shall praise and glorify God, together with us, forever; for, "Christ shall come with a multitude of heavenly angels," at the day of judgment: "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, then we shall for ever glorify God," Saints and angels together in heaven. Therefore, in Heb. xii. 22. it is said, "we are come to the innumerable multitude of angels." What is the meaning of that? That is, now in the New Testament, by our communion with Christ, we have association with the blessed angels, "innumerable company of angels," saith the Holy Ghost there; we have association with them even from our infancy, till we be in glory. Indeed, they are as nurses: "They shall carry thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone;" as it is in Psal. xci.—they keep us from many inconveniences.

But you will say, God's children fall into inconveniences, how then are they attended by angels?

I answer.—First of all, God's angels preserve those that are his, from many inconveniences that they know not of: And certainly, we have devils about us continually; and there is a conflict betwixt good angels and devils about us continually. And, when when we do fall into any inconvenience, it is because we are not in our way. If we go out of our way, they have not the charge over us; they are to keep us in our ways. And if they keep us not from "dashing our foot against a stone," if they keep us not from ill; yet they keep us in ill, and deliver us out of ill at length: for they deliver us not only from evil, that we fall not into it; but they keep us in ill, and deliver us out of ill; nay, and by ill: if we suffer in the custody of angels any inconvenience, it is that we may be tried by it, that we may be exercised and bettered by it. There is nothing that falls out of God's children in the world, but they gain by it, whatsoever it is. This therefore doth not prejudice the attendance of angels.

Therefore let us comfort ourselves in all conditions for ourselves, and for the state: put case it be brought to a very small number, that the enemies were thousands more than we, many

ny thousands and millions; yet, if we be in the covenant of grace, and in good terms with God, we have "more for us than against us," we shall have angels fight for us. You know, Elisha's servant, when he saw a multitude of enemies, his eyes were opened to see a company of angels; and, saith the prophet, "there are more for us than against us." So, let us be to the eye of the word never so few, and never so weak; let us but have Elisha's eye, the eye of faith, and we shall have his guard about us alway, and about the commonwealth: this should comfort us.

But then we must learn this duty, not to grieve these good spirits. As it is wondrous humility, that they will stoop to be servants to us, that are of a weaker baser nature than they; so it is wondrous patience, that they will continue still to guard us, notwithstanding we do that which grieves those good spirits: one motive to keep us in the way of obedience, that we do not grieve those blessed spirits, that are our guard and attendance: Let us consider, when we are alone; (it would keep us from many sins) no eye of man seeth; I, but God seeth, and conscience within seeth, and angels within are witnesses; they grieve at it, and devils about us rejoice at it. These meditations, when we are solicited to sin, would withdraw our minds, and take up our hearts, if we had a spirit of faith to believe these things.

Let us learn to make this use, likewise to magnify God, that hath thus honoured us; not only to take our nature upon him, to be "manifest in the flesh;" but also to give us his own attendance, his own guard, a guard of angels. Indeed, we are in Christ above angels, advanced higher than angels, (what cause have we to praise God?) How are we advanced above them? We are the spouse of Christ, and so are not angels: they are under Christ, as a head of government, and a head of influence—they have strength and confirmation from Christ: he is not head of redemption, but of confirmation to them. St Paul calls them "elect angels," that stand—they stand by Christ, they have good by him: but they are not the spouse of Christ, we are the spouse, and members of Christ: He hath honoured our nature more than the angelical; he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of men; and as he hath advanced us above angels, so his dispensation is, that those glorious creatures should be our attendants for our good, and they distaste not this attendance.

And

And this is that we ſhould know, what care God hath over us, and what love he beares us; that he hath honoured us ſo much, that creatures of a more excellent rank than we are, even the angels, would be ſervicable to us in Chriſt. And all is, that we ſhould be full of thankfulneſs.

But you will ſay, What need the guard or attendance of angels to Chriſt, or to us, to head or members, conſidering that God is able to guard us with his almighty power?

It is true: The creatures that God hath ordained in their ſeveral ranks, they are not for any defect in God, to ſupply his want of power, but further to enlarge and demonſtrate his goodneſs. He is the Lord of hoſts; therefore he will have hoſts of creatures one under another, and all ſerviceable to his end: His end is, to bring a company to ſalvation, to a ſupernatural end, to happineſs in the world to come; and he being Lord of all, he makes all to ſerve for that end. He could do it himſelf; but having ordained ſuch ranks of creatures, he makes all to ſerve for that end, for the manifeſtation of his power, and of his goodneſs, not for any defect of ſtrength in himſelf. He could do all himſelf, he could have been content with his own happineſs, and never have made a world; but he made the world, to ſhew his goodneſs, and love, and reſpect to mankind. So he will have angels attend us, though he watch over us by his own providence: this takes not away any care of his, but he ſhews his care, in the attendance of angels and other creatures, he uſeth them to convey his care and love to us.

But you will ſay, How can the angels help our ſouls any kind of way? they may help our outward man, or the ſtate where we live, but what good do they to the inward man?

I anſwer: The inward man is eſpecially ſubject to the ſpirit of Chriſt—it is God that bows the neck of the inward man: But yet notwithſtanding, if the devils can ſuggeſt ſin, angels are as ſtrong as devils, and ſtronger and wiſer too—they are wiſer than the devil is malicious, and ſtronger than the devil is powerful—whatſoever they can do in evil, the good angels can in good. Therefore no queſtion, but they ſuggeſt many thoughts that are good—they are not only a guard about us, but they are tutors, to teach and inſtruct us—they miniſter good thoughts, and ſtir up good motions and ſuggeſtions. They work not upon the heart of man, immediately to alter and change it, (that is proper to God), but by ſtirring up motions, and, by way of ſuggeſtion, as the devils do in in ill, ſo they in good.

good. Therefore, it is said, they comforted our blessed Saviour; which, I suppose, was more than by their presence. So they comfort God's children, by presenting to their thoughts, (we know not how, the manner is mystical, it is not for us to search into that) good motions, by stirring up to good, only the altering and change of our dispositions, that is proper to the holy spirit of God.

Let us often think of this, what a glorious head we have, for whose sake, the angels attend upon us in all states whatsoever, even till we come to heaven.

And this should stir us up to labour to be made one with Christ; all the good we have any way, is by the interest we have in Christ first, he holds it in *capite*, if we have not a being in our own head Christ, we can challenge nothing in the world, no attendance of angels: for the angels are at variance with us out of Christ: we see presently after the fall, the cherubim was set with his sword drawn, to keep the entrance of paradise, from whence Adam was shut, to shew, that presently upon the fall, there was a variance, and a mighty distance between the angels and us. But now the angels no longer shut paradise; no, they accompany us in the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan, to paradise, they go up and down Jacob's ladder, they attend upon Christ, and for his sake they are ministering spirits, for the comfort of the elect, so that all things are reconciled now in Christ, both in heaven and earth, angels, and men. It should stir us up, to get interest in Christ, so that we may have interest in all these excellent things that first belong to Christ, and then to us. Whatsoever is excellent in heaven or earth, belongs to the king of all, which is Christ; and to the queen of all, the church: and the time will come, that there will be no excellency but Christ and his church. All whatsoever that is in the world, is nothing; it will end in hell, and desperation, all other excellency whatsoever.

This should teach us likewise to carry ourselves answerable to our condition, to take a holy state upon us: we should think ourselves too good, to abase ourselves to sin, to be slaves to men, to flesh and blood, (be they what they will be) to the corruptions and humours of any man, since we have the angels to attend upon us, we are kings, and have a kingly guard, it should move us to take a holy state upon us, it should force a carriage suitable to kings, that have so glorious attendance. Undoubtedly, if we had a spiritual eye of faith, to believe and to know this,

this, answerable to the things themselves, and their excellency; it would work a more glorious disposition in Christians than there is, to carry ourselves as if we were in heaven before our time. Oh, that we had clear eyes, answerable to the excellency of the privileges that belong to us.

Again, it should teach us not to despise the meanest Christians, seeing angels despise not to attend on them. Shall we disdain to relieve them, that the angels do not disdain to comfort? To comfort and relieve one another, it is the work of an angel: Shall any man think himself too good to help any poor Christian? Oh, the pride of man's nature! when the more glorious nature of the angels disdain not to be our servants; and not only to great and noble men, but to little ones, even to Lazarus. What a devilish quality is envy and pride, that stirs us up to disdain to be useful to one another, especially to those that are inferiors? We know it was the speech of wicked Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Shall I stoop to him? Flesh and blood begins to take state upon it. Alas, if angels had taken state upon them, where had this attendance been? The devils, that kept not their first standing, being proud spirits, they disdained the calling they had—the good angels humble themselves. God himself, as it is Psal. 113. disdains not to look on things below. When the great God became man, shall we wonder that angels should attend upon the nature that God hath so honoured? What a devilish sin then is envy, and pride, and disdain? Let these considerations move us, to be out of love with this disposition: the angels joy at the conversion of others; shall that be our heart-smart and grief, which is the joy of angels? Shall we despise the work of regeneration, and the image of God in another. Shall it be the joy of angels, and shall it be our sorrow, the welfare and thriving of others spiritually or outwardly? Shall we, out of disdain, and envy, think ourselves too good to do any thing, when it is the delight of angels?

The angels are described with wings, to fly, in Isa. 6. to shew their delight in their attendance, and wings to cover their faces, and their feet, to shew their adoration, and reverence of God, the nearer they come to God, the more reverence, so there is no Christian, but, like the angels, the nearer he comes to God, the more he abaseth himself, and adores God: as Job, when he came nearer to God than he was before, "I abhor myself (saith he) in dust and ashes," when God came to talk with him; the angels, the nearer they come to God, the more reverence they shew, the more they cover their faces in his presence.

And

And with the other wings they fly, and do their duty, to shew their expedition in their service to Christ, and his church, they do readily what they do, let us imitate the angels in this.

The angels have a double office, a superior office, and an inferior—the superior office they have is, to attend upon God, to serve God and Christ, to minister to our head; the inferior office is, to attend his church, and to conflict with the evil angels that are about us continually.

It is good for us to know our prerogatives, our privilege, and our strength; not to make us proud, but to stir us up to thankfulness, and to a holy carriage: it is a point not much thought on by the best of us all, we forget it, and betray our own comfort. Satan abuseth us, to make us forget the dignity and strength that we have, hereby we dishonour God, and wrong ourselves, and wrong the holy angels for want of faith, and consideration of these things. A christian is a more excellent creature than he thinks of. It is necessary oftimes to think what a great degree God hath raised us to, in Jesus Christ, that we have this glorious attendance about us, wherever we are: Oh, it would move us, as I said, to comfort, and to a reverend carriage; and indeed when we carry ourselves otherwise, it is for want of minding, and believing these things: I have spoken something the more of it, because we are subject to neglect this blessed truth; therefore, for the time to come, meditate oftener of this spring of comfort than formerly we have done.

Preached to the Gentiles.

Christ, our blessed Saviour, being king of his church, it was not sufficient that he was manifested in the flesh, and justified in the spirit, that is, declared by his divine power, to be God, but he must have his nobles to acknowledge this too. Kings, in their inaugurations, not only make good their own title, what they can themselves, but they would have others to acknowledge it; therefore it is said, Christ was seen of angels, those noble, and glorious creatures.

But not only the greatest of the kingdom, but likewise the meaner subjects must know their king, there must be a proclamation to them, to know who is to rule over them: Therefore, Christ being a general catholic king, there must be a publication and proclamation of Christ all the world over; he must be

" preached

" preached to the Gentiles." But yet that is not enough: upon proclamation. there muſt be homage of all thoſe that he is proclaimed a king to: therefore, it follows, " believed on in the world;" that is, the world muſt ſtoop, and ſubmit, and give homage to Chriſt, as the Saviour of the world, as the mediator of mankind. Thus we ſee how theſe things follow one upon another. To come to the words,

" Preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world."

Theſe follow one another, by a neceſſary order—for, preaching goes before faith; faith is the iſſue and fruit of preaching—Chriſt is firſt " preached to the Gentiles," and then, " believed on in the world." The points conſiderable, are theſe.

Firſt, that there muſt be a diſpenſation of ſalvation wrought by Chriſt, unto others. It is not ſufficient, that ſalvation was wrought by Chriſt " manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit; but this ſalvation and redemption wrought, it muſt be publiſhed and diſpenſed to others: therefore, he ſaith, " Preached to the Gentiles."

And then, this publication and preaching, it muſt be of Chriſt. Chriſt muſt be publiſhed to the Gentiles—all is in Chriſt that is neceſſary to be publiſhed.

Then, the perſons to whom? To the Gentiles, that is, to all. The church is enlarged ſince the coming of Chriſt; the pales and bounds of the church are enlarged.

And then the fruit of this: Chriſt being thus diſpenſed to the Gentiles, the world believes. All preaching is for the obedience of faith, as St. Paul ſaith, Rom. i. and Rom. xvi. " That the obedience of faith may be yielded to Chriſt." Preaching to the Gentiles is, that he may be believed on in the world.

Firſt of all—There muſt be a diſpenſation of Chriſt.

See the equity of this, even from things among men. It is not ſufficient that phyſic be provided; but, there muſt be an application of it. It is not ſufficient, that there is a treaſure; but there muſt be a digging of it out. It is not ſufficient, that there be a candle, or light; but, there muſt be a holding out of the light, for the good and uſe of others. It was not ſufficient that there was a brazen ſerpent; but, the brazen ſerpent muſt be lifted up, that the people might ſee it. It is not ſufficient,

cient, that there is a ſtandard; but the ſtandard muſt be ſet up. It is not ſufficient, that there be a foundation; but there muſt be a building upon the foundation. It is not ſufficient that there be a garment; but there muſt be a putting of it on. It is not ſufficient, that there be a box of ointment, but the box muſt be opened, that the whole houſe may be filled with the ſmell. It is not ſufficient that there be tapeſtry and glorious hangings; but there muſt be an unfolding of them—therefore there muſt be a diſpenſation of the myſteries of Chriſt: for, though Chriſt be phyſic he muſt be applied—though he be a garment, he muſt be put on—though he be a foundation, we muſt build on him, or elſe we have no good by him—though he, in his truth, be a treaſure, yet he muſt be digged up in the miniſtry—though he be a light he muſt be held forth—though he be food, there muſt be an application—of neceſſity, therefore, there muſt be a diſpenſation of the goſpel, as well as redemption wrought by Chriſt, preached to the Gentiles.

To unfold the point a little, ſeeing the neceſſity of it to ſhew,

What it is to preach.

What it is to preach Chriſt. And,

What it is to preach Chriſt to the Gentiles.

To preach is to open the myſtery of Chriſt, to open whatſoever is in Chriſt, to break open the box, that the ſavour may be perceived of all. To open Chriſt's natures, and perſon, what it is; to open the offices of Chriſt, firſt he was a prophet to teach, wherefore he came into the world; then he was a prieſt, offering the ſacrifice of himſelf, and then after he had offered his ſacrifice, as a prieſt, then he was a king, he was more publickly, and glorioufly known to be a king, to rule: after he had gained a people, by his prieſthood, and offering, then he was to be a king to govern them; but his prophetical office is before the reſt: he was all at the ſame time; but I ſpeak in regard of manifeſtation: now, to preach Chriſt, is to lay open theſe things.

And likewiſe the ſtates wherein he executed his office. Firſt, the ſtate of humiliation—Chriſt was firſt abaſed, and then glorified: the fleſh he took upon him, was firſt ſanctified, and then abaſed, and then he made it glorious fleſh: he could not work our ſalvation, but in a ſtate of abaſement; he could not apply it to us, but in a ſtate of exaltation and glory. To open the

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the merits of Chriſt, which he hath wrought to his father for us: To open his efficacy as the ſpiritual head of the church, what wonders he works in his children, by altering and raiſing of them, by fitting and preparing them for heaven: Likewiſe, to open all the promiſes in Chriſt, they are but Chriſt diſhed and parcelled out—all the promiſes in Chriſt, are yea and amen: They are made for Chriſt's ſake, they are all but Chriſt ſevered into ſo many particular gracious bleſſings: To preach Chriſt, is to lay open all this, which is the inheritance of God's people.

But it is not ſufficient to preach Chriſt, to lay open all this in the view of others; but in the opening of them, there muſt be application of them to the uſe of God's people, that they may ſee their intereſt in them; and there muſt be an alluring of them, for to preach is to woo. The preachers are *paranymphi*, the friends of the bridegroom, that are to procure the marriage between Chriſt and his church: therefore, they are not only to lay open the riches of the huſband, Chriſt; but likewiſe to intreat for a marriage, and to uſe all the gifts and parts that God hath given them, to bring Chriſt and his church together.

And becauſe people are in a contrary ſtate to Chriſt: to preach Chriſt, is even to begin with the law, to diſcover to people their eſtate by nature. A man can never preach the goſpel that makes not way for the goſpel, by ſhewing and convincing people what they are, out of Chriſt. Who will marry with Chriſt, but thoſe that know their own beggary and miſery, out of Chriſt? That he muſt be had of neceſſity, or elſe they die in debts eternally; he muſt be had, or elſe they are eternally miſerable. Now, when people are convinced of this, then they make out of themſelves to Chriſt. This therefore muſt be done, becauſe it it is in order that which makes way to the preaching of Chriſt; for, "the full ſtomach deſpiſeth an honeycomb." Who cares for balm, that is not ſick? Who cares for Chriſt, that ſees not the neceſſity of Chriſt? Therefore, we ſee John Baptiſt came before Chriſt, to make way for Chriſt, to level the mountains, to caſt down whatſoever exalts itſelf in man. He that is to preach, muſt diſcern what mountains there be between men's hearts and Chriſt, and he muſt labour to diſcover themſelves, and lay flat all the pride of men in the duſt; for, the word of God is forcible to puſh down ſtrong holds and imaginations, and to bring all into ſubjection to Chriſt. And indeed, though a man ſhould not preach the law; yet, by way of implication, all theſe things are wrapt in the goſpel. What need a Saviour, unleſs we were loſt?

loſt? What need Chriſt to be wiſdom to us, if we were not fools in ourſelves? What need Chriſt be ſanctification to us, if we were not defiled in ourſelves? What need he be redemption, if we were not loſt and ſold in ourſelves to Satan, and under his bondage? Therefore, all is to make way for Chriſt; not only to open the myſteries of Chriſt, but in the opening and application, to let us ſee the neceſſity of Chriſt. In a word, being to bring Chriſt and the church together, our aim muſt be, to perſuade people to come out of their eſtate they are in, to come and take Chriſt; whatſoever makes for this, that courſe we muſt uſe, though it be with never ſo much abaſing of ourſelves. Therefore, the goſpel is promulgate in a ſweet manner; "I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," &c. The law comes with, "curſed, curſed;" but now in the goſpel, Chriſt is preached with ſweet alluring; "I beſeech you brethren;" and, "we as ambaſſadors beſeech you, as if Chriſt by us did beſeech you;" &c. This is the manner of the diſpenſation in the goſpel, even to beg of people that they would be good to their own ſouls. Chriſt, as it were, becomes a beggar himſelf; and the great God of heaven and earth begs our love, that we would ſo care for our own ſouls, that we would be reconciled to him. It was fitter, indeed, we ſhould beg of him; it was fit we ſhould ſeek to be reconciled to him: but God ſo ſtoops in the diſpenſation and miniſtry of the goſpel, that he becomes a beggar and ſuitor to us, to be good to our ſouls—as if he had offended us, he deſires us to be reconciled: the wrong is done on our part, yet he ſo far tranſcends the doubtings of man's nature that he would have nothing to cauſe men's hearts to miſgive, no doubts nor ſcruples to ariſe; he himſelf becomes a beſeecher of reconciliation, as if he were the party that had offended. This is the manner of the publication of the goſpel: I do but touch things, to ſhew what it is to preach Chriſt.

Uſe.—Seeing then, of neceſſity, there muſt be a diſpenſation, together with the goſpel, let us labour to magnify this diſpenſation of preaching; that, together with redemption, and the good things we have by Chriſt, we have alſo the ſtandard ſet up, and the brazen ſerpent lifted up by "preaching the unſearchable riches of Chriſt" unfolded to us. It is a bleſſed condition. Let us magnify this ordinance, (without diſparaging other means of reading, &c.) This preaching is that whereby God diſpenſeth ſalvation and grace ordinarily.

And God in wiſdom ſees it the fitteſt way to diſpenſe his grace to men by men: Why?

I.—To try our obedience to the truth itſelf, he would have men regard the things ſpoken, not for the perſon ſpeaking them, but for the excellency of the things. If ſome glorious creatures, as the angels, ſhould preach to us, we ſhould regard the excellency of the preachers, more than the truth itſelf; we ſhould believe the truth, for the meſſenger's ſake.

And then—II. God would knit man to man by bonds of love; now there is a relation between paſtor and people, by this ordinance of God.

And then—III. It is more ſuitable to our condition; we could not hear God ſpeak, or any more excellent creature: God magnifies his power the more, in bleſſing theſe weak means.

And it is more proportionable to our weakneſs, to have men that ſpeak out of experience from themſelves, that preach the goſpel, that they have felt the comfort of themſelves; it works the more upon us. Therefore, thoſe that firſt preached the goſpel, they were ſuch as had felt the ſweetneſs of it themſelves firſt. St Paul, a great ſinner out of the Church, and St Peter, in the church, he fell, after he was in the ſtate of grace; that theſe great apoſtles might ſhew to all people, that there is no ground of deſpair, if we humble ourſelves; if they be ſins out of the church, if they be ſins againſt the firſt table; as Paul, he was a blaſphemer; or, againſt the ſecond, he was a perſecutor; yet he found mercy notwithſtanding: and for this end he found mercy (he ſaith) that he might teach the mercy of God to others, that he might be an example of the mercy of God to others. And, ſo, if we relapſe and fall, let none deſpair. Peter, a great teacher in the church, and an apoſtle, ſee how foully he fell. Now, when men ſubject to the ſame infirmities, ſhall diſcover the mercy of God out of the book of God, it works the more upon us.

It is good for us to have a right eſteem of the ordinances of God, becauſe the prophane heart of man doth think it a needleſs matter.

Queſtion.—Some are ready to ſay, Cannot I as well read privately at home?

Anſwer.—Yes: but the uſe of private exerciſes, with contempt of

of the public, they have a curſe upon them inſtead of a bleſſing. It is with ſuch men as with thoſe that gathered manna, when they ſhould not; it ſtank. Has God ſet up an ordinance for nothing, for us to deſpiſe? Is not he wiſer to know what is good for us, better than we do for ourſelves? God accompanies his ordinance with the preſence of his bleſſed ſpirit. The truth read at home hath an efficacy, but the truth unfolded, hath more efficacy. As we ſay of milk warmed, it is fitter for nouriſhment; and the rain from heaven hath a fatneſs with it, and a ſpecial influence more than other ſtanding waters: ſo there is not that life, and operation, and bleſſing, that accompanies other means, that doth preaching, being the ordinary means where it may be had.

Object.—Ay, but this ordinance of God, preaching, it is only for the laying the foundation of a church, it is not for a church when it is built: then, other helps, or prayer, and the like, without this, may ſuffice.

Anſ.—Thoſe that have ſuch conceits, they make themſelves wiſer than the ſpirit of God: in St. Paul, we ſee in Eph. iv. "Chriſt, when he aſcended on high, he led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men, ſome apoſtles, ſome prophets, ſome evangeliſts, for the edifying and building up of the church." So that this ordinance it is neceſſary for building up ſtill, and for the knitting of the members of Chriſt together ſtill: Therefore, that is a vain excuſe.

Object.—Oh, but why need ſo much, leſs would ſerve the turn?

Anſwer.—Thus people grow to contemn and deſpiſe this heavenly manna: but thoſe that are acquainted with their own infirmities, they think it a happineſs to have plenty; for, naturally we are dull, we are forgetful, we are unmindful; though we know, we do not remember; and though we remember, yet we do not mind things: we are naturally weak, and therefore we need all ſpiritual ſupports and helps that may be, to keep the veſſel of our ſouls in perpetual good caſe: the more we hear, and know, the fitter we are for doing and ſuffering; our ſouls are fitter for communion with God, for all paſſages both of life and death: therefore, we cannot have too much care this way.

Oh, let us therefore, chuſe Mary's part, the better part, that will never depart from us, and take heed of profane conceits in

this kind; it is to the prejudice of our ſouls. We muſt know, that whenſoever God ſets up an ordinance, he accompanies it with a ſpecial bleſſing: And we are not ſo much to conſider men in it, but conſider the ordinance which is his; and, being his, there is a ſpecial bleſſing goes with the diſpenſation of the word, by the miniſtry.

Object.— Others object, they know it well enough; and therefore they need not to be taught.

Anſwer.—The word of God preached, it is not altogether to teach us, but (the ſpirit going with it) to work grace, neceſſary to ſtrengthen us in the inward man. And thoſe that ſay they know it enough, deceive themſelves they know it not: Religion is a myſtery, and can it be learned at the firſt? There is no myſtery, but it requires many years to learn: if it be but a handicraft, men are ſix or ſeven years learning it; and is religion, and the myſteries and depths of it learned ſo ſoon, think we? There is a myſtery in every grace, (in repentance, in faith, in patience), that no man knows, but thoſe that have the graces, what belongs to thoſe graces. Religion conſiſts not in ſome parts, and abilities, to ſpeak and conceive of theſe things; and yet that is hardly learned, being contrary to our nature, having no ſeeds of theſe things. Even the outſide of religion, that is the preparative to the inward, there is ſomewhat to do, to bring our hearts to theſe things. But then, religion itſelf is a deep myſtery, it requires a great deal of learning.

Let us therefore ſet a price upon God's ordinance: there muſt be this diſpenſation—Chriſt muſt be preached. Preaching is the chariot which carries Chriſt up and down the world—Chriſt doth not profit, but as he is preached: For, ſupernatural benefits, if they be not diſcovered, they are loſt, as we ſay of jewels, if they be not diſcovered what is the glory of them? Therefore, there muſt be a diſcovery by preaching, which is the ordinance of God for that end. Whereupon God ſtirred up the apoſtles before, who were the main converters of the world: they had ſome prerogatives above all other preachers, they had an immediate calling, extraordinary gifts, and a general commiſſion—in them was eſtabliſhed a miniſtry to the end of the world. "Chriſt, when he aſcended on high, and led captivity captive," (he would give no mean gift then, when he was to aſcend triumphantly to heaven), the greateſt gift he could

give

give, was, some to be prophets, some apostles, some teachers, for the building up of the body of Christ, till we all meet a perfect man in Christ. "I will send them pastors according to my own heart," saith God, Jer. iii. It is a gift of all gifts, the ordinance of preaching; God esteems it so, and so should we esteem it.

And to add this further, to clear it from whatsoever may rise up in any man's mind, do but consider in experience, where God sets up his ordinance, how many souls are converted—some are savingly cast down, and then raised up again—their lives are reformed—"they walk in the light, they know whither they go,"—they can give an account of what they hold. The state of those that live under the ordinance of God, is incomparably more lightsome, and comfortable and glorious, than those that are in the dark, that want it. If we had no other argument, experience is a good argument. Where doth popery and profaneness reign most? In those places where this ordinance of God is not set up, for popery cannot endure the breath of the gospel. Thus we see the necessity and benefit of preaching.

But then (in the next place) this preaching must be of Christ—Christ must be preached.

Question.—But must nothing be preached but Christ?

Answer.—I answer, nothing but Christ, or that which tends to Christ. If we preach threatenings, it is to cast men down, that we may build them up; if a physician purge, it is, that he may give cordials: whatsoever is done in preaching, to humble men, it is to raise them up again in Christ, all makes way for Christ. When men are dejected by the law, we must not leave them there, but raise them up again—whatever we preach, it is reductive to Christ, that men may walk worthy of Christ. When men have been taught Christ, they must be taught to "walk worthy of Christ, and of their calling," that they may carry themselves fruitfully, and holily, and constantly, every way suitable to so glorious a profession, as the profession of christian religion is. The foundation of all these duties, must be from Christ, and the reasons and motives of a christian's conversation must be from Christ, and from the state that Christ hath advanced us unto; the prevailing reasons of an holy life, are fetched from Christ. "The grace of God hath appeared," (saith St. Paul, it hath shined gloriously) "teaching us to deny all ungodliness,

godlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, and righteously, and holily, in this preſent evil world." So that Chriſt is the main object of preaching. This made St. Paul, when he was among the Corinthians, profeſs no knowledge of any thing, but of Chriſt and him crucified; to eſteem and value nothing elſe. He had arts, and tongues, and parts, he was a man excellently qualified, but he made ſhew of nothing in his preaching, and in his value and eſteem, but of Chriſt, and the good things we have by Chriſt.

Now Chriſt muſt be preached wholly, and only, we muſt not take any thing from Chriſt, nor join any thing to Chriſt. The Galatians did but believe the neceſſity of ceremonies with Chriſt; and the apoſtle tells them, "Ye are fallen from Chriſt." It is a deſtructive addition to add any thing to Chriſt. Away with other ſatisfaction, the ſatisfaction of Chriſt is enough; away with merit, the merits of Chriſt are all-ſufficient; away with merit of works in matter of ſalvation, Chriſt's righteouſneſs is that which we muſt labour to be found in, and not in our own, all is but dung and droſs, in compariſon of the excellent righteouſneſs we have in Jeſus Chriſt. You muſt hear, and we muſt preach all Chriſt. St. Paul ſaith, he "was jealous with a holy jealouſy" over thoſe he taught: Why? Leſt Satan ſhould beguile them, and draw them from Chriſt to any other thing. Why is the Church of Rome ſo erroneous, but becauſe ſhe leaves Chriſt, and cleaves to other things: Therefore, we muſt labour to keep chaſte ſouls to Chriſt; and thoſe that are true preachers, and ambaſſadors, and meſſengers, they muſt be jealous with a holy jealouſy over the people of God, that they look to nothing but Chriſt.

Chriſt muſt be preached.

But to whom?

To the Gentiles.

Here lies the myſtery, that Chriſt, who was "manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit," ſhould be "preached to the Gentiles." What were the Gentiles? Before Chriſt's time they were dogs in our Saviour Chriſt's cenſure; "Shall I give the children's bread to dogs?" Before Chriſt's time, they ſat in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death. Before Chriſt's time, they were the halt and the lame, that he, the great feaſt-maker, ſent to bid come in: they were aliens from the common-

wealth

wealth of Iſrael; without God in the world; without God, becauſe they were without Chriſt. It is not to be imagined, in what miſery the poor Gentiles were, before the coming of Chriſt, except ſome few proſelytes, that joined themſelves to the Jewiſh church; for the Gentiles worſhipped devils: What were all their gods, but devils? they were under the kingdom of Satan, when the goſpel came to be preached among them—they were tranſlated out of the kingdom of Satan, into the bleſſed and glorious kingdom of Chriſt, Coloſſ. i. Yet we ſee here, notwithſtanding they were ſuch kind of people, the myſtery of the goſpel is preached to theſe, to the Gentiles.

It was ſuch a myſtery, as that St Peter himſelf, although he were acquainted with it, oft times by Chriſt, and he might read of it in the prophets; yet notwithſtanding he was to be put in mind of it, Acts x. when he was to go to Cornelius, he ſaw a viſion full of beaſts, and a voice ſaying, "kill and eat:" and, indeed, the Gentiles were little better than beaſts; they were eſteemed ſo, before they had the goſpel; and the preaching of it to them, you ſee it was a myſtery to St Peter himſelf.

Object.—But why did God ſuffer the Gentiles "to walk in their own ways?" as the apoſtle ſaith, Acts xiv. 16. Why did he neglect to overlook the Gentiles, and ſuffer them to go on in their own ways, ſo many thouſand years before Chriſt came; were they not God's creatures, at well as the Jews?

Anſwer.—I anſwer; this is a myſtery, that God ſhould ſuffer thoſe witty people, that were of excellent parts, to go on in their own ways. But there was matter enough in themſelves; we need not call God to our bar, to anſwer for himſelf; they were malicious againſt the light they knew; they impriſoned the light of nature that they had, as it is Rom. i. they were unfaithful in that they had: therefore, beſides that it is a myſtery, God may well be excuſed. Do but look to the judgment that ſome of the heathens had of divine things, what reprobate and malicious judgments they had, how baſely they eſteemed of the Jews? the Jewiſh nation, ſays Tully, ſhew how God regards them, in that ſhe hath been overcome ſo oft by Nebuchadnezzar, and Pompey, &c. What a reaſoning was this? And that proud hiſtorian Tacitus, how ſcornfully doth he ſpeak of Chriſtians? It is not to be imagined, the pride that was in the heathens againſt the Jewiſh religion, eſpecially the Chriſtian

religion, how they ſcorned and perſecuted it, in the beginning of it. So you ſee, in the beſt of the heathen men there was matter and ground of God's juſt condemning of them: therefore we need not quarrel with God againſt that.

Object.—But here is another myſtery, Why the Gentiles, being all alike naught, God ſhould leave the better of the Gentiles, and reveal Chriſt to the worſt? Were not Socrates, and Plato, and ſuch like, more goodly moraliſts than the Corinths and Epheſians? What kind of people were the Corinthians? A proud people, fornicators, idolaters, as the apoſtle ſaith, ſuch were ſome of you; here is a myſtery.

Anſwer.—It is God's ſovereignty, we muſt let God do what he will; he will be merciful to whom he will be merciful, and he will neglect whom he will, ſaith Auſtin, we muſt be very reverend in theſe matters; it is moſt ſafe to commit all to God, and uſurp no judgment here. It is a myſtery, yet there is ſome ſatisfying reaſon may be given, why the Gentiles were called, when Chriſt came in the fleſh, and not before; beſides, many propheſies foretold that it ſhould be ſo, and ſome reaſon may be given why it was ſo.

Becauſe they were to be incorporate to the Jews, to be fellow-citizens with the church of the Jews, they were to be of God's houſehold; as it is excellently and largely ſet down in Epheſ. ii. Now, Chriſt coming, took down the partition-wall: Chriſt is the centre in whom they meet, in whom they are one; therefore, they met one with another when Chriſt came, becauſe he is the Saviour of both; he is the corner-ſtone, whereupon both are built: ſo that now they are fellow-citizens, ſince Chriſt came.

And you ſee in the genealogy of Chriſt, he came both of Jews and Gentiles, as we ſee in Ruth. Divers of our Saviour's anceſtors, they were Gentiles as well as Jews; to ſhew that he who came of both, came to be the Saviour of both. But it is the ſafeſt, (as I ſaid before), in theſe queſtions, to reſt in the wiſe unſearchable diſpenſation of God; and rather be thankful, that God hath reſerved us to theſe times, and places of knowledge, than to aſk why our forefathers did not know Chriſt. We enjoy a double ſpring of the goſpel, and the benefits of it. Firſt, we were delivered from heatheniſm. What kind of people were we in Julius Cæſar's time? barbarous people. And after

after, when popery came in, God delivered us from that; there was a ſecond ſpring. Yet, how few give God praiſe, who hath had mercy on us Gentiles, who hath delivered us from Gentiliſm, and from the darkneſs of popery? but we grow weary of religion, as they did of manna.

Let us therefore make good uſe of it, that God hath been merciful to us Gentiles, in theſe latter times. And let us, who are born in the precincts of the church, help our faith in the time of temptation this way—certainly God means well to my ſoul; I might have been born before in times of ignorance, and places of ignorance, and never heard of Chriſt; but I have been baptized and admitted into the church; and by that there is an obligation; before I underſtood myſelf, I was bound to believe in Chriſt; God was ſo careful to my ſoul, when I underſtood nothing, that there ſhould be a bond for me to believe in Chriſt. If God had not meant well to my ſoul, I ſhould not have lived ſo much as to hear of the goſpel. Thus we ſhould gather upon God, as the women of Canaan did upon our Saviour Chriſt; and fight againſt all diſtruſt and unbelief, and all temptation of Satan, which preſent God as though he cared not for us. There cannot be too much art and ſkill, to help our faith this way.

Again, the Gentiles have now intereſt in Chriſt, ſince the coming of Chriſt, and not before; it is a myſtery. It were not a myſtery, if the Gentiles had had intereſt in Chriſt, and been within the pale of the church before.

There are ſeveral degrees of the diſpenſation of ſalvation. There is firſt, the ordaining of ſalvation; that was before all worlds. And then the promiſe of ſalvation, that was when Adam fell. Then, there is the procuring of ſalvation promiſed; that was by Chriſt, when he came in the fleſh. Then there is the promulgation, and enlarging of ſalvation to all people; this was after Chriſt was come in the fleſh. Then there is the perfect conſummation of ſalvation, in heaven. Now, the execution of the promiſe, and the performance of all good concerning ſalvation, it was reſerved to Chriſt's coming in the fleſh; and the enlargement of the promiſe to all nations, was not till then. I do but touch this to ſhew, that God hath had a ſpecial care of this latter age of the world. Some account the firſt age of the world, to be a golden age; the next, ſilver; and then, an iron age: but indeed we may invert the order; we live in the golden age, the laſt ages, when Chriſt was manifeſted. What is the glory of times and places? The manifeſtation

tan: it is the glory of a nation to have the truth among them. The glory of Iſrael was gone, when the ark was taken—the religion and truth we enjoy, it is our ark; our glory is gone, if we part with that. Therefore, whatſoever God takes from us, let us deſire that he would ſtill continue the goſpel of truth; that he would ſtill vouchſafe to dwell among us, and not leave us. What were all things in the world beſides, if we had not the bleſſed truth of God? we muſt leave all ere long. Therefore let us labour to have the eyes of our underſtanding enlightened, to conceive aright of the difference of things, and to value ourſelves by this, that Chriſt is manifeſted to us, and thereby we have intereſt in Chriſt, more than by any intereſt and part and portion in the world beſides: for then Chriſt will delight to be with us ſtill, when we make much of him, and eſteem, and prize, and value him.

Believed on in the world.

After "preached to the Gentiles," he joins, "believed on in the world;" to ſhew that faith comes by hearing. Indeed, preaching is the ordinance of God, ſanctified for the begetting of faith, for the opening of the underſtanding, for the drawing of the will and affections to Chriſt. Faith is the marriage of the ſoul to Chriſt: now, in marriage there muſt not be a miſtake, and error in the perſon; for, then it is a kind of nullity. Now, that the perſon to whom we are to be married by faith, may be known to us, there is an ordinance of preaching ſet up, to lay open our own beggary and neceſſity, what we are without him, and to open the riches of our huſband, the nobility and privileges, and whatſoever is glorious in Chriſt, that the church may know what kind of a huſband ſhe is like to have. In Rom. x. you have the *ſcala cœli*, the ladder of heaven, as a good old martyr called it, and we muſt not preſume to alter the ſtaves of that ladder: "How can they call upon him on whom they have not believed; and how ſhall they believe without a preacher; and how ſhall they preach unleſs they be ſent?" Here is preaching, and believing, and then prayer. There are ſome that are bitter againſt this ordinance of preaching, and advance another excellent ordinance of prayer, to the diſparagement of this; if they would join them both together, it were well. You ſee what the Apoſtle ſaith, "How ſhall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed; and how ſhall they believe without

without a preacher? without this ordinance of preaching: ſhewing, that we cannot have the Spirit of prayer, without faith; nor faith, without preaching. And the wiſe man ſaith, "He that turns his ear from hearing the law, (under what pretence ſoever) his prayer ſhall be abominable." The prayers of ſuch men, that would cry down this ordinance, how are they like to be accepted? they are abominable. We ſee here, the apoſtle ſets them down in this degree, hearing, and believing, and prayer; and here, in this place, preaching goes before believing.

Therefore, the goſpel unfolded, is called the word of faith, becauſe it begets faith, God by it works faith; and it is called the miniſtry of reconciliation, becauſe God by it publiſheth reconciliation. As preaching goes before believing, ſo it is the bleſſed inſtrument, by reaſon of the ſpirit accompanying of it, to work faith. In the miniſtry of the goſpel, there is not only an unfolding of the excellent things of Chriſt, but there is grace given by the ſpirit to believe: And herein this publication and proclamation differs from all other publications in the world; men may publiſh and proclaim what they would have, but they cannot give hearts to believe it; but in the bleſſed promulgation and publiſhing of divine truths, there is the ſpirit of God accompanying it, to work what it publiſheth; it opens the riches of Chriſt, and offers Chriſt, and Chriſt is given to the heart with it; it publiſheth what is to be believed and known, and it alters our courſes; together with it, there goes a power (the ſpirit clothing the ordinance of preaching) to do all. Therefore it is called the miniſtry of the ſpirit; Why? becauſe what is publiſhed in the preaching of the word, to thoſe that belong to God, it hath the ſpirit to convey it to the ſouls of God's people. Therefore he ſaith here, firſt preached, and then believed.

Therefore, thoſe that are enemies to this ordinance of God, they are enemies of the faith of God's people, and, conſequently, enemies of the ſalvation of God's people. But the more the proud and haughty atheiſtical heart of man riſeth againſt it, the more we ſhould think there is ſome divine thing in it; it muſt needs be excellent, becauſe the proud heart of man ſtomachs it ſo much: we ſee here, it is the means to work faith. Therefore, as we eſteem faith, and all the good we have by it; let us be ſtirred up highly to prize and eſteem of this ordinance of

of God. So much for the coherence, or connexion, "preached to the Gentiles:" and then,

Believed on in the world.

From the words themſelves, we ſee here, firſt, that Chriſt as he muſt be unfolded in preaching, ſo he muſt be believed on.

Becauſe the diſpenſation miniſterial, is not enough, unleſs there be an applying grace in the heart; and that is a ſpirit of faith, whoſe property is, to make peculiar that which is offered: There is a virtue of application in this grace of faith; where there is a giving, there muſt be a receiving, or elſe the gift is uneffectual. Chriſt is the garment of the ſoul, he is the foundation, and food, &c. As I ſaid before, he is our huſband, we muſt give conſent—believing is a ſpiritual marriage: in marriage there muſt be a conſent; this conſent is faith; that makes up the bond between Chriſt and the believing ſoul. Therefore, of neceſſity there muſt be faith; all elſe, without believing in Chriſt, is nothing. Faith is the means of making Chriſt our own, and no other thing whatſoever.

The papiſts have ridiculous means, that they underſtand not themſelves, nor any body elſe: they make the ſacrifice of the maſs a means to apply Chriſt and other courſes: but the miniſterial means to apply Chriſt, is the preaching of the goſpel, and faith, that is wrought by the miniſtry of the goſpel; and there is no other way of application, by the maſs, or any ſuch thing. Chriſt without faith does us no good: in Heb. iv. "The word that they heard did not profit them, becauſe it was not mingled with faith:" The word of God, the goſpel, it is the power of God to ſalvation; but it is to all that believe: whatſoever good Chriſt doth to us, he doth it by faith. It is a rule in divinity, and it is to purpoſe, in the deciding ſome controverſies, that a ſpiritual benefit not known and applied, is a nullity; becauſe God intends all, whatſoever we have to be opened to us, and applied, that he might have the glory, and we the comfort. We ſee the excellency, and neceſſary uſe of this grace of faith.

How is Chriſt to be believed on?

I. We muſt reſt upon no other thing, either in ourſelves, or out of ourſelves, but Chriſt only. In popery, they have many other things

things to reſt on, and their faith being corrupt, all their obedience likewiſe is corrupt, that ſprings from it. They diſhonour Chriſt, to join any thing in the world with him. The apoſtle is wondrous zealous in this, to have nothing joined with Chriſt: as in Galat. v. "If ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing:" only Chriſt muſt be believed on, in matter of ſalvation.

II. And whole Chriſt muſt be received: believing is nothing but a taking or receiving of Chriſt, as a Lord, and as a Saviour; as a prieſt, to redeem us by his blood; and Chriſt, as a king, to govern us; we muſt take whole Chriſt.

We ſee what manner of faith is in moſt men; that ſnatch out of Chriſt what they liſt, to ſerve their own turn: as he died for their ſins, ſo they are glad of him; but as he is a Lord, and king to rule and govern them, ſo they will have none of him; but "turn the grace of God into wantonneſs." But Chriſt, as we muſt reſt and rely on him only, ſo we muſt receive him, and believe on him wholly.

Now faith looks upon Chriſt as the main object of it, as it juſtifieth; the ſame faith, it looks upon the whole word of God, as a divine truth revealed: but for the main work of it, it looks upon Chriſt: Chriſt is the jewel that this ring of faith doth incloſe: and as the ring hath the value from the jewel, ſo hath faith from Chriſt. In the main point of juſtication, and comfort, faith lays hold upon Chriſt for mercy: for the diſtreſſed afflicted ſoul, looks firſt of all to comfort, and peace, and reconciliation: therefore it looks firſt to him that wrought it, that is, Chriſt. Now, the ſame faith that doth this, it believes all divine truths, the threatenings, and precepts, &c. Faith chuſeth not its object, to believe what it liſts; but it carries the ſoul to all divine truths revealed: but, when we ſpeak of juſtifying faith, then Chriſt, and the promiſes and mercy of God in Chriſt, is the firſt thing that the ſoul looks unto.

Chriſt is the firſt object of faith, before any benefit or gift that we have from him; firſt, we muſt receive Chriſt, before we have any grace, favour, or ſtrength from him: And a ſanctified ſoul looks firſt to Chriſt, to the love of Chriſt, to the perſon of Chriſt, and then to his goods and riches. As one that is married, ſhe regards firſt the perſon of her huſband, and then looks to the enjoyment of his goods, and inheritance, and nobilities

bilities; or elſe it is no better than a harlot's love. So faith looks to the perſon firſt; it knits us to Chriſt, to be in love with, and to embrace Chriſt; and then it looks to all the good things we have by him: for he never comes alone, there is a world of good things in him; all that tends to grace and glory: yet it is the perſon of Chriſt, that the ſoul of a chriſtian principally looks to; other divine truths are the object of faith, to direct and ſway our lives: yet notwithſtanding they are not the object of faith, when we look for comfort, for forgiveneſs of ſins, and reconciliation with God; then it looks to Chriſt eſpecially.

Therefore, we that are miniſters of the goſpel of Chriſt, ſhould eſpecially look to unfold the riches of Chriſt; and thoſe that are God's people ſhould eſpecially deſire to have Chriſt unfolded, and the riches of God's love in Chriſt. The ſoul that ever found the ſting of ſin, the conſcience that ever was awakened, to feel the wrath of God, it accounts nothing ſo ſweet, as evangelical truths; thoſe things that concern his huſband and Saviour. A carnal man loves to hear moral points wittily ſpoken of, as delightful to his ear; but the ſoul that underſtands itſelf what it is by nature, that ever felt in any degree the wrath of God for ſin, of all points, it deſires moſt to hear of Chriſt, and him crucified. Therefore, we may judge of ourſelves by our ears, of what temper our ſouls are; for, "the ear taſtes of ſpeeches, as the mouth doth meats," as Job ſaith.

Believed on in the world.

By world, eſpecially here in this place, is meant, the world taken out of the world, the world of elect. There is a world in the world, as one ſaith well, in unfolding this point, as we ſee, man is called a little world, in the great world. Chriſt was preached to the world of wicked men, that by preaching a world might be taken out of the world, which is the world of believers. Hence we may clear our judgments in that point, that when Chriſt is ſaid to redeem the world, it muſt not be underſtood generally of all mankind: we ſee here, the world is ſaid to believe in Chriſt; did all mankind believe in Chriſt; was there not a world of unbelievers.

We ſee here Chriſt "believed on in the world;" the world that was oppoſite, that were enemies, that were under Satan. Who

Who ſhall deſpair then? Therefore let us conceive well of Chriſt. Why was he manifeſt in the fleſh, and why is there an ordinance of preaching? Wherefore is all this, but that he would have us believe, be our ſins what they will: Put the caſe, that there were a world of ſin in one man, that one man were a world of naughtineſs; as in ſome ſenſe, St. James ſaith, "there is a world of wickedneſs in the tongue;" if in the tongue, much more in the heart, which is the ſink of wickedneſs. But put the caſe, there were a world of wickedneſs in one man; what is this, to the ſatisfaction of God manifeſt in the fleſh, and to the infinite love of God, now pacified in Chriſt, looking upon us in the face of his beloved ſon? You ſee here, Chriſt is believed on in the world: Do but conſider what is meant by the world in ſcripture, how it is ſet down to be in an oppoſite ſtate to Chriſt; and look to the particular ſtate of the Gentiles; that are ſaid to be the world; what wretched people were the Corinthians, before they believed; and the Epheſians, and the reſt?

Let no man therefore deſpair; nor, (as I ſaid before), let us not deſpair of the converſion of thoſe that are ſavages in other parts; how bad ſoever they be, they are of the world: and if the goſpel be preached to them, Chriſt will be believed on in the world; Chriſt's almighty power goeth with his own ordinance, to make it effectual: ſince the coming of Chriſt, the world lies before Chriſt, as beloved of him, ſome in all nations. The goſpel is like the ſea, what it loſes in one place it gaineth in another: ſo the the truth of God, if it loſe in one part, (if it be not reſpected), it gets in another, till it has gone over the whole world.

And when the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in, then comes the converſion of the Jews. Why may we not expect it? They were the people of God. We ſee Chriſt believed on in the world: we may therefore expect, that they ſhall alſo be called; there being many of them, and keeping their nation diſtinct from others.

Now I ſhall ſhew how this is a myſtery; "great is the myſtery of godlineſs, Chriſt believed on in the world:" This is a great myſtery to join thoſe together—the world, and believing: it is almoſt as great a myſtery, as to join God and man together; a virgin and a mother: to bring an unbelieving rebellious heart (ſuch as is in the world) and believing together, it is a great myſtery, in divers conſiderations.

First, if we consider what the world was; an opposite and enemy to Christ; and under his enemy, being slaves to Satan, being idolaters, in love with their own inventions, which men naturally dote on. Here was the wonder of God's love and mercy, that he should vouchsafe it to such wretches. We may see by St. Paul's epistles, what kind of people they were, before they embraced the gospel. Here was God's wondrous dignity, that God should shine upon them that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death;" that were abused by Satan, at his will: That the world, that is, all sorts of the world, from the highest to the lowest, should all stoop to the cross of Christ: That emperors should lay their crowns at Christ's feet; as Constantine and others; Christ at length subdued the Roman empire itself to the faith: That the philosophers of the world, that were witty, and learned, should at length come to embrace the gospel; for divers of the fathers that were philosophers before: That men of great place, of great parts, and learning, and education, and breeding, should deny all, and cast all prostrate at the feet of Christ; for these to be overcome by plain preaching, for meanness to overcome mightiness, for ignorance to overcome knowledge; yet notwithstanding these great and wise men of the world were overcome by the gospel.

It was a mystery that the world should believe; if we consider (besides their greatness and wisdom), the inward malicious disposition of the world, being in the strong man's possession: for these men to believe the gospel, surely it must be a great mystery.

Again, if we consider the parties that carried the gospel, whereby the world was subdued; a company of weak men, unlearned men, none of the deepest for knowledge; only they had the Holy Ghost, to teach and instruct, to strengthen and fortify them, (which the world took no notice of), men of mean condition, of mean esteem, and few in number. And these men, they came not with weapons, or outward defence, but merely with the word, and with sufferings; their weapons were nothing but patience and preaching, offering the word of Christ to them, and suffering indignities, as St. Austin saith; the world was not overcome by fighting, but by suffering: So the lambs overcame the lions, the doves overcame the birds of prey, the sheep overcame the wolves. "I send you (saith Christ) as sheep among wolves:" and how? by nothing but by carrying a message, and suffering constantly and undauntedly, for

for going with their meſſage, for they had cruel bloody laws made againſt them, that were executed to the utmoſt; yet by theſe means they overcame; by preaching, and ſealing the truth that they taught by ſuffering: a ſtrange kind of conqueſt. The Turks conquer to their religion, but it is by violent means—it is a religion of blood: but here, as I ſaid, meanneſs overcame greatneſs, ignorance overcame learning, ſimplicity overcame pride, baſeneſs overcame glory; a myſtery in this reſpect.

Again, if we conſider the truth that they taught; being contrary to the nature of man, contrary to his affections; to enforce ſelf-denial to men, that naturally are full of ſelf-love, that make an idol of their wit, and will: for them to come to be taught to be fools, in reſpect of wit, and to reſign up their wills to the will of another: for theſe men to believe things that are above belief to carnal men, as St. Auſtin obſerves, it was the wonder of the world; what a kind of doctrine was this to win ſuch entertainment in the world as it did? yet, it did make men deny themſelves, deny their wits, their wills, their goods, their lives. Therefore, in this reſpect, it was a great myſtery, that Chriſt ſhould be believed on in the world.

Again, if we conſider another circumſtance, it adds to the myſtery, that is, the ſuddenneſs of the conqueſt; the world was conquered to the faith and obedience of Chriſt. In a ſhort time after Chriſt, one man, St. Paul, ſpread the goſpel almoſt all the world over; he conquered almoſt all the world, he ſpread the ſavour of the goſpel like lightning, ſuddenly, and ſtrongly; becauſe there was an almighty power and ſpirit accompanying the glorious goſpel; and thereupon it came to be thus effectual with the world.

Again, it is a wonder, in reſpect of Chriſt, whom the world believed on. What was Chriſt? Indeed, he was the Son of God, but he appeared in abaſed fleſh, in the form of a ſervant: he was crucified; and for the proud world to believe in a crucified Savour, it was a myſtery.

Laſtly, it is a great myſtery, eſpecially in reſpect of faith itſelf; faith being ſo contrary to the nature of man. For the heart of man, where faith is wrought, to go out of itſelf, and to embrace a beginning, and principle, and riſing of life, from another; to ſeek juſtification and ſalvation, by the righteouſneſs and obedience of another: for the proud heart of man to ſtoop to this, to acknowledge no righteouſneſs of its own to ſtand before the tribunal of God, but to have all derived from Jeſus

Chriſt; to fetch forgiveneſs of ſins out of the death of another. to wrap itſelf in the righteouſneſs and obedience of Chriſt, given of God for it; the heart of man, without a ſupernatural work of the ſpirit to ſubdue it, will never yield to this; becauſe proud fleſh and blood will always have ſomewhat in itſelf to dote upon, and to ſet it out before God; and when it finds nothing in itſelf, then it deſpairs: for the heart of man thus to go out of itſelf, and rely only on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, not having its own righteouſneſs—this is the greateſt myſtery. Eſpecially for a guilty ſoul, that hath its eyes opened, to diſcern of its own eſtate; for a conſcience awakened, to truſt in God, being a holy God, a juſt God: for theſe two to meet together, God, and a doubting, galled, miſgiving conſcience, fore-caſting the worſt: for ſuch a conſcience to find peace, by this act of faith caſting itſelf upon Chriſt; this is more than can be done by any power of nature.

There is ſomewhat in nature, for all legal obedience; man naturally hath ſome ſeeds, to love his parents, to hate murder, and the like: but to go out of himſelf, and caſt himſelf upon God's love, and mercy in Chriſt, there is no ſeeds of this in nature, but all againſt faith in Chriſt: often times, when a man is caſt down, all in the world ſeems to make againſt him; and then for a man to have his heart raiſed up by an almighty power, to believe; certainly this muſt be a myſtery: I ſay, when all makes againſt him, his conſcience makes againſt him, and the judgment of God againſt him, and Satan's temptations againſt him, all the frame of things preſent ſeems to be againſt him, God himſelf often times ſeems to be againſt him, to be an offended God, juſtly offended with his ſins; for the ſoul in this caſe, to caſt itſelf upon God, in Chriſt, there muſt needs be a hidden and excellent deep work on the ſoul: This is the greateſt myſtery, the greateſt difficulty is in this branch; conſidering how contrary to the heart of man faith is.

Let us take heed of ſhallow conceits of faith; as if it were an eaſy common univerſal grace, to believe: No, beloved, it is a ſupernatural powerful work. St. Paul ſets it out divinely, and largely, in Epheſ. i. 18. he calls it, the mighty power of God: it requires not only a power, but an almighty power, to raiſe the heart of man to believe. For, even as the work of redemption, by Chriſt, is a greater work in itſelf, than the work of creation; ſo alſo the work of converſion, though they be all one to an infinite power, yet the thing itſelf is more difficult, to make the heart of man to believe, than to make a world of nothing; for, when God made the world, there was nothing to oppoſe, there

there he had to do with ſimple nothing; but when God comes to make the heart believe, he finds man againſt himſelf, he finds the heart and conſcience againſt itſelf, he finds oppoſition from Satan, that helps man's diſtruſtful heart; then all meet together, afflictions, the ſenſe of God's anger, and man's guilty conſcience: now to make ſuch a man believe, is more than to create a world.

And as God ſhewed more power, ſo he ſhewed more mercy in the work of redemption than in the creation. In the creation, there he did good to a good man; Adam was created good, and he ſhould (had he ſtood) have continued in a good condition; but in the work of redemption, God doth good to evil men; God tranſcends in his love, becauſe the glory of his mercy reigns in the work of redemption: ſo that the power, and wiſdom, and mercy, being greater in the work of redemption, it requires a more ſupernatural power in the ſoul to apprehend this, than any other truth; as the work in redemption is more glorious, ſo the divine grace and virtue in the ſoul, that makes uſe of this, (which is faith) it muſt be more excellent than all other graces whatſoever. And as it muſt be God, that muſt ſave and redeem us, ſo it muſt be God that muſt perſuade the heart of this: as Chriſt, who is God, muſt perform the work of redemption; ſo it muſt be God, the Holy Ghoſt, that muſt perſuade the heart, that God loves it ſo much, and raiſe the heart to apprehend it, and make uſe of it; no leſs power will do it. Let us (I ſay) have great conceits of this excellent grace of faith; all men have not faith; it is a rare grace, a rare jewel. When Chriſt comes, ſhall he find faith in the world? Certainly, it is a myſtery, for a man to believe in Chriſt; for a natural man to be brought to rely upon Chriſt; "To you it is given to believe," ſaith the apoſtle: he might well ſay it is given, it is no ordinary gift neither. Therefore let us pray, with the diſciples, "Lord increaſe our faith;" and with the poor man in the goſpel, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief."

The next thing I will touch, ſhall be this; that faith is put here for all graces. Here, in theſe ſix clauſes of this great myſtery of godlineſs, there is only this one that is within us; "God manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, received up in glory;" theſe are all without us: but this one, "believed on in the world," that is only within us, and it is ſet down inſtead of all, and indeed ſo it is; for it draws all other graces after it, it enlivens and quick-

ens the ſoul, it is the ſpring of ſpiritual life in us, it is the firſt grace of all: There are ſome degrees of the ſpirit (perhaps) before it, but all graces have their quickening from faith; it infuſeth ſupernatural vigour into all the parts and powers of the ſoul, and into all graces whatſoever. Where Chriſt is believed on in the world, all follows, love and patience, and courage and fortitude, whatſoever; as we ſee in Heb. xi. "By faith they had a good report:" they had a good report for patience, and for courage, and for other good works; but, all theſe came from faith: therefore, by faith they had a good report. Therefore, the acting of all other graces, it comes from faith: By faith, Enoch walked with God: by faith, Noah and Moſes did ſo and ſo; ſignifying that faith is the ground of all. Faith fetcheth ſpiritual life from Chriſt; for all, whatſoever is good; it knits us to the ſpring of life, Chriſt; it is the grace of union. Even as Satan, by unbelief, did infuſe all his poiſon at the firſt; for, by making our firſt parents ſtagger in the word of God, came ſin; ſo, by faith, all obedience comes: all have their riſing and beginning from faith.

As it draws ſpiritual life from Chriſt, ſo the encouragements are by faith, to all other graces whatſoever, for patience, and love, &c. Faith muſt ſet before them the object, and the reaſons from the glory to come, from the love of God in Chriſt; when faith propounds all this, then it ſtirs and quickens all graces: Faith yields ſtrong reaſons, and diſcourſe, to ſtir us up to whatſoever is neceſſary. Why do I hope for the glory to come? I believe it firſt. Why do I love God? I believe he is my father, in Chriſt; all have ſtrength from love, and that from faith: unleſs I love him, I can expreſs no virtue for him, no patience, no good work: ſo it puts life unto all; therefore, it is here put for all, believed on in the world. It ſhould ſtir us up to make much of this faith, above all graces to deſire it.

And being a myſtery, and ſo excellent a grace, we had need to diſcern whether we have it, or no; therefore I will touch a few evidences, ſome of them out of the text.

Firſt, if you believe, it comes uſually after preaching. We ſee here, preached to the Gentiles; and then, believed on in the world. Whence came thy faith? If not by the ordinance of God, thou mayeſt expect it to be a baſtard faith, it hath not a right beginning; eſpecially if it be joined with contempt of God's ordinance, it is no faith, but a preſumptuous conceit;

preaching

preaching and believing here go one after another. Therefore, examine how thy faith was wrought in thy heart.

Again, (as I ſaid), faith being a myſtery in regard of ſuch a world of oppoſition between the heart of man and Chriſt, Satan helping the unbelieving heart; here muſt needs be a ſtrife and conflict with faith. Therefore, thoſe men that never had conflict with their own unbelieving heart, that never had conflict with Satan's temptations, they never had faith; it is with oppoſition, and conflict, no grace hath the like conflict and oppoſition from Satan: for Satan aims, in all ſins, to ſhake our faith and affiance in God's love: As God aims at the ſtrengthening of faith above all; ſo the devil hates it, above all; and in all temptations whatſoever, he aims to ſhake our faith at the laſt. Therefore, there muſt needs be oppoſition to ourſelves, and our own doubting nature, and to Satan's temptations, and to the courſe of things, that ſometimes are clean oppoſite to a man: for a ſinner to believe the forgiveneſs of ſins, for a miſerable man to believe glory in the world to come, for a dying man to believe life eternal, for a man tumbled into the grave, to believe that he ſhall riſe from the dead; if there be no conflict with theſe things, ſo oppoſite to faith, there is no faith.

Then again, in the third place, it is the ſpring of all obedience; the Apoſtle calls it, the obedience of faith, Rom. i. "All preaching is for the obedience of faith;" obedience of faith, brings obedience of life, and converſation. Examine thyſelf therefore, by the courſe of thy obedience; by that which comes from faith, ſee that it works in thy ſoul, in thy life, and converſation. And here I might be very large; for where faith is,

Firſt of all, (after it hath been a means to juſtify, to lay hold upon the all-ſufficient righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to ſtand between God and us, to clothe and cover our ſouls, then) it pacifieth the conſcience; "Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." Faith hath a quieting power; it quiets the ſoul, becauſe it propounds to the ſoul a ſufficient ſatisfaction in God-man; it propounds to the ſoul Chriſt ſealed by God the father; having done all that is neceſſary to ſalvation, it ſets down the ſoul: for he was God, and therefore able; and man, and therefore willing to ſave. Faith ſets Chriſt, as wooing us firſt, in his miniſters inviting us, alluring us, commanding us, removing objections from our own unworthineſs; "Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden:" and objections from our want of any goodneſs; "Come,

and buy without money, the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt. Hereupon faith comes to quiet the ſoul, in the ſweet courſe that Chriſt takes to bring the ſoul to him, being ſo able and willing, and ſhewing his willingneſs by all means, that may procure love, that the ſoul may reſt without doubting. Saith the ſoul, ſurely Chriſt intends well to me, being ſo able, God in the fleſh, and ſetting up an ordinance, a miniſtry, whereby he invites me, and allures me, and commands me; and then, alſo, I have examples before me, of wicked men being converted: hereupon the ſoul comes to be at reſt. Faith hath a quieting power.

And then again, there is preſently an alteration of the courſe; Jordan goes backward; there is a turning of a man wholly: for, faith is a turning of the ſoul quite another way; it turns the ſoul from the world to God, and Chriſt, from the preſent evil world, to a better world. We ſee, as ſoon as Zacheus believed, his thoughts were altered, his eſteem of the things of this life was altered; "half of my goods I give to the poor." We ſee, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, as ſoon as they believed, they burned their books. As ſoon as a man believes in Chriſt, down goes the eſteem of of the world, and all worldly things whatſoever, becauſe he ſees a higher excellency in Chriſt. The poor goaler, when he had miſuſed the apoſtles, as ſoon as he believed, we ſee how he neglects all, and makes a feaſt for them preſently. As ſoon as faith enters into the ſoul, there is a mean and baſe eſteem of all things, and a high eſteem of Chriſt. All is dung in compariſon of Chriſt: There is a change of the ſoul, and an eſteem that goes before that change. We work, as we eſteem, as ſoon as we believe, we eſteem Chriſt, and the things of a better life, above all other things: And thereupon goes the whole ſoul and bent of it that way, though with ſome conflict. We ſee in the epiſtles of St Paul, before thoſe men believed in Chriſt, the Epheſians, the Coloſſians, the Romans, &c. what wicked people they were before, and how they were changed—as ſoon as they believed, then they were ſaints.

Again, where this faith is, it is a triumphing, a conquering grace, a prevailing grace; it overcomes the world, and whatſoever is oppoſite: for, it ſets before the ſoul greater things than the world can. The world preſents terrors: what are theſe to the glory that ſhall be revealed? The world ſets out pleaſures to allure us, and profits and favours, and this and that; but what are all theſe to the favour of God in Chriſt: what are they to heaven? What can the world ſet before the ſoul

ſoul of a believer, that is not beneath? Faith can raiſe the ſoul above all worldly things; it ſubdues the natural doubts and loves, the fears of troubles and cares for the world; and all the affections that were before ruling in the ſoul, ſubdues all to itſelf, and makes all ſerviceable. Thus, it prevails; if not at the firſt, yet in the continuance of time, it prevails by little and little, in the hearts of all believers. It is a victorious grace, as we ſee in Moſes and Abraham, &c. how it prevailed againſt all other obſtacles whatſoever. How many diſcouragements had bleſſed Abraham to leave his father's houſe, and to go he knew not where; and after to ſacrifice his ſon? yet faith overcame all. So Moſes, to leave the court, and cleave to a deſpiſed people; what a work of faith was there? Faith is victorious. Therefore, when people are drawn away with any thing, that the looks of any man alarms them, that the very noiſe of danger affrights them, when the hope of any riſing will make them warp to do any thing; when the hope of any gain will make them wrong their conſcience, where is the triumph of faith? As I ſaid before, there is a prevailing power in faith; becauſe faith ſets before the ſoul, that which is incomparably better, and incomparably worſe: What is all that man can do, in compariſon of hell and damnation; conſcience ſaith, if you do this ye ſhall die: And on the other ſide, what is all the world can give, in compariſon of heaven; which faith preſents to the eye of a believer.

Again, where this believing is, it is a working grace, it works by love; by the love to God, it deſires the communion and fellowſhip of that it deſires, and it works by love, to other believers; it works towards Satan hatred, toward wicked men, ſtrangeneſs in converſation. It is a working grace; it works by love, to all good to God and God's people and to ourſelves; it makes us have too high eſteem of ourſelves, to be ſtained with the baſe ſervices of ſin; it works every way, and indeed it muſt needs be ſo, when faith ſets before the ſoul the love of God, in Chriſt: Hath God loved me ſo, to redeem me from ſuch miſery by ſuch a courſe as this, "God manifeſt in the fleſh;" to advance me to ſuch happineſs, being (ſuch as I was before) a ſinner? Oh, the thought of this will conſtrain us, as the phraſe of the apoſtle is; "the love of Chriſt conſtraineth me:" and then the ſoul will be active, and earneſt in any thing, that may be for the honour of Chriſt. Hath Chriſt thought nothing too dear for me, not his own blood; for the ſalvation of my ſoul, is the price of his blood: He came down from heaven, he

was

was God manifeſt in the fleſh, on purpoſe, in love to my ſoul; and ſhall I think any thing too dear for him? And hereupon faith works, and ſtirs up love; and when it is ſtirred up by it, it is acted by it; it uſeth the love of God, in all the performance of worſhip to God, and in doing all good to our brethren, and to ourſelves, to carry ourſelves as we ſhould every way.

We ſee the woman in the goſpel, Luke vii. when ſhe had much forgiven her, "ſhe loved much:" all duties come from love. What need I ſpeak of particular branches? Chriſt brings all to love, he includes all duties in that one, in love; becauſe they came from love; and have love to carry them, and to mingle itſelf with them; and love comes from faith—faith working by love, evidenceth that we believe; where there is no love, there is no faith. Therefore, let us labour to have this affection of love kindled; if we would have love kindled, we muſt ſtir it up by faith. You ſee, then, that this believing is the leading grace.

Let us labour by all means, therefore, to water this root. When we would have trees flouriſh and thrive, we pour water to the roots of them. Now, the radical grace in a Chriſtian's ſoul, is this believing; this truſting in God, reconciled in Chriſt; this relying upon Chriſt; a convincing perſuaſion, that God and Chriſt are mine: this is the radical grace of all other, let us water and cheriſh this by all means whatſoever.

And, to this end, let us labour to increaſe in knowledge;" "I know whom I have believed," ſaith the apoſtle: for, all grace comes into the ſoul by the light of knowledge; whatſoever is good, is conveyed by light into the heart. Faith eſpecially, is the bent of the will to Chriſt, receiving him; but this comes by a ſupernatural light, diſcovering Chriſt. Therefore, let us deſire to hear much of Chriſt, of his privileges and promiſes; the more of Chriſt we know, the more we ſhall believe, and ſay with the apoſtle, I know whom I have believed.

It is a fond and wicked tenet of the papiſts to ſay, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; and Bellarmine's tenet is, that faith is better defined by ignorance than by any thing elſe; a fond unlearned conceit. For, howſoever the reaſon and depth of the things of faith cannot be ſearched, yet we may know the things that are revealed in the ſcriptures. The more I know the things that are revealed concerning Chriſt, and know that they are God's truths, the more I know the more I ſhall

ſhall believe. Faith of neceſſity requires knowledge; therefore knowledge is put for all other graces: "This is eternal life, to know thee, and whom thou haſt ſent;" becauſe it is an ingredient in faith; the more we ſhall believe; they that know thy name, will truſt in thee. Is it not ſo in men's matters? the more we know a man to be able, and faithful of his word, the more we ſhall truſt him. Is it not ſo in divine things? the more we know of Chriſt, and of his riches, and truth, the more experimental knowledge we have of him, that we find him to be ſo, the more we ſhall truſt him. Therefore, by the knowledge that is got by the means, let us labour for an experimental knowledge, that ſo we may truſt and believe in him more and more. Let us look to the paſſages of our lives in former times, how gracious God hath been towards us, and take in truſt the time to come, that he will be ſo to the end; "he is the author and finiſher of our faith." And let us ſearch into the depth of our own wants and weakneſſes, and this will force us to grow in faith more and more, this will be a means to increaſe our faith: the more we ſee of our own nothingneſs, and inability, without Chriſt, that we are nothing, nay, that we are miſerable without him, the more we ſhall cleave to him, and caſt ourſelves upon him. Thoſe who have the deepeſt apprehenſions of their own wants and weakneſs, uſually they have the deepeſt apprehenſions of Chriſt, and grow more and more rooted in him. The ſearching of our own corruptions every day, is a notable means to grow in faith; to conſider what we are, if it were not for God's mercy in Chriſt, and this will make us to make out of ourſelves to Chriſt; it will make us fly to the city of refuge. Joab, when he was purſued, he fled to the horns of the altar. When conſcience purſues us, it will make us fly to the horns of the altar, to the city of refuge: a ſearch into our own conſcience and ways, will force us to live by faith, and to exerciſe faith every day, in Chriſt Jeſus.

And this is to feed on Chriſt daily, to fly to Chriſt, when we are ſtung with ſin and hunger; in the want of grace and ſtrength, to fly to him for ſupply; and ſo to keep and increaſe faith, by this excellent means. Chriſt is all in all, to thoſe that hope to be ſaved by him; Chriſt is the ground of our life, and comfort, and our happineſs: Therefore we ſhould make out to him, upon all occaſions, to cleave to him in life, and death. We cannot preſs this point of faith too much. Why are Chriſtians called believers? becauſe believing is all: if we can prove the

the truth of our faith and believe, we prove all; if we be faulty in that, all is rotten; whatsoever is without faith is sin. All mens natural morality and civility, it is, (as it were) but copper graces, but counterfeits; they are but for the outward appearance, and not in truth; they are not enlivened and quickened by faith in Christ. But I leave this, and come to the last clause,

Received up in Glory.

This is the last branch of this divine mystery of godliness, but it is none of the least. Christ ascended, if we respect himself; he was received, if we look to his Father; himself ascended, his father received him: the scripture hath both words; ανεβη, he ascended up, that is, for himself; ανελημφθη, he was received up; that is, he was assumpted; there is no difficulty in the words: he ascended up, as well as he was received up, positively, as well as passively. In his death, he was not only crucified by others, and delivered by his Father, but he gave himself to death; so he was not only received up in glory, but he ascended up into glory. This shews the exaltation of Christ. The Apostle begins with, "God manifest in the flesh;" there is the descent; a great mystery, for the great God to descend into the womb of a virgin, to descend to the lowest parts of the earth: and then he ends with this, "Received up in glory." The ascent is, from whence the descent was. Christ ascended, and was received as high as the place was whence he came down: God manifest in the flesh, that is the beginning of all; received up in glory, that is the consummation, and shutting up of all. It implies all; his exaltation, his resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at the right hand of God, and his coming to judge the quick and the dead: especially is meant his glory after his resurrection, his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God; yet supposing his resurrection,

Received up to Glory.

Glory implies three things: It is an exemption from that which is opposite, and a conquering over the contrary base condition. It implies some great eminence, and excellency, as the foundation of it, and then a manifestation of that excellency; and it implies victory over all opposition. Tho' there be excellency, if there be not a manifestation of that excellency, it is not glory. Christ was inwardly glorious, while he was on earth,

earth, in the ſtate of abaſement; he had true glory, as he was God and man; but there was not a manifeſtation of it, and therefore it is not properly called glory; there was not a victory, and ſubduing of all that was contrary to his glory; for, he was abaſed, and ſuffered in the garden, and died. But, where theſe three are an exemption and freedom from all baſeneſs, and all that may diminiſh reckoning and eſtimation, and when there is a foundation of true excellency, and likewiſe a ſhining, a declaring, and breaking forth of that excellency—there is glory. But Chriſt, after he was manifeſt in the fleſh, and had done the work here that he had to do, he was received up to glory; that is, all baſeneſs was laid aſide: his glory appearing, all abaſement did vaniſh; he was victorious over that: for, in his reſurrection, which was the firſt degree of his glory, you know, the clothes that he was bound with, were left in the grave, the ſtone was removed, all things that might hinder his glory, that might abaſe him in body, in ſoul, or condition, they were removed: there was an excellency in all, that was not before, in regard of manifeſtation. For his body, it was now impaſſable, an immortal ſpiritual body, it could ſuffer no longer; it was not fed with meat and drink, as in the time of his abaſement; it was a body ſo agile, and ſo nimble, that he could move even as he would himſelf; ſo there was a glory put upon his body, above the ſun. There was a glory upon the ſoul; all that might hinder that, was ſubdued; for, there was no ſorrow, no fear, nor grief, as there was in his ſoul, before he was glorified: ſo both in body and ſoul he was more glorious.

And then for his whole condition, that was glorious, he was was abaſed no longer; for, now he was taken into the higheſt place of all, above the heavens: and as his place is moſt eminent, ſo his government is moſt eminent; for, he is taken up there above all principalities and powers, as it is Epheſ. i. 20. and is gloriously ſet down at the right hand of God, 1 Pet. iii. All being ſubject to him, he hath the domination and government of all. So that whatſoever might ſhadow and cloud him, all ills, either in body, in ſoul, or condition, all was removed, and he was glorious in all.

For excellency, the foundation of glory, that was always with him, in his very abaſement; but now it was manifeſted: he was "mightily declared to be the Son of God, by raiſing himſelf from the dead:" he was declared to be glorious in all thoſe things wherein he could be glorious. As no perſon can be glorious

glorious, but either it muſt be in body or ſoul, or condition; he was glorious in all: for, he was received up into the place of glory, to heaven, to the aſſembly of glory, to the preſence of his father, and the bleſſed ſaints and angels; and no queſtion but there was a glorious welcome. If the angels came ſo cheerfully to proclaim his incarnation, when he was born, and ſang, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men:" What kind of triumph do you think, was made by all the bleſſed company in heaven, when he was entertained thither, after his abaſement: It is beyond our conceits to imagine.

It will not be altogether unuſeful to ſpeak of the circumſtances of Chriſt's being taken up to glory.

I. Whence was he taken? He was taken up to glory from Mount Olivet, where he uſed to pray, and where he ſweat water and blood, where he was humbled; from the place of humiliation was his aſcenſion to glory: ſhewing unto us, that the place oft times where we pray, where we are afflicted, our ſick-beds, nay, the places of our abaſement, the very priſons, they may be as Mount Olivet to us, from whence God will take us to glory. Let no man, therefore, fear any abaſement; it may prove as Mount Olivet to him in this reſpect.

II. And when he was taken up to glory? Not before he had finiſhed his work, as he ſaith, John xvii. 4. "I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do:" Then he was taken up, when he had done all, when he had accompliſhed our ſalvation: And after his abaſement, not before. So, our taking up to glory, it muſt be when we have done our work, when we have finiſhed our courſe, when we have run our race, when we have fought the good fight. And alſo, after our abaſement, we muſt firſt ſuffer with Chriſt, before we can be glorified with him. Again, if we ſpeak of the firſt degree of Chriſt's glory, his reſurrection; he was taken up to glory, when he was at the loweſt that could be, when he was in the grave: ſo God's church and children, at the loweſt, they are neareſt to glory. We uſe to ſay, things when they are at the worſt, are neareſt mending: ſo is the ſtate and condition of the church of God; and every particular chriſtian, when he is loweſt, he is neareſt raiſing: as we ſhall ſee afterwards.

III. The witneſſes of this, were the angels: they proclaimed his incarnation, with joy, and without doubt they were much more joyful at his aſcending up to glory; it was in the preſence of the

the angels. So, likewiſe, when he ſhall come to manifeſt his glory at the day of judgment, there will be innumerable thouſands of angels. Thoſe glorious creatures were witneſſes of his glory; and no queſtion, but they yielded their joyful attendance, and ſervice, that they were ſo willing to attend him at his birth, and coming into the world.

He was carried up in the clouds, in which alſo he ſhall come again at the laſt day.

But before he was taken up to glory, he was forty days on earth, to give evidence to his apoſtles and diſciples of his reſurrection, and to inſtruct and furniſh them in things concerning their callings; afterwards, he was taken up to glory. And, in all that time of his abode on earth, after his firſt degree of glory, his reſurrection, he was never ſeen of ſinful eye, (for any thing we ſee in ſcripture,) I mean of thoſe that were ſcorners of him, that deſpiſed him. The Scribes and Phariſees, and carnal people, did not ſee him, they had no commerce at all with him, after his reſurrection: they that deſpiſed him in his abaſement, had no comfort by his exaltation.

But that which I will chiefly preſs in this clauſe, ſhall be to ſhew, that as this is a myſtery, ſo how it is a myſtery of Godlineſs, to ſtir us up to godlineſs: for, as I ſaid before, divine truths and principles, they are called godlineſs: becauſe, where they are embraced, they work godlineſs, the ſoul is transformed into them: where theſe truths are ingrafted in the ſoul, as St. Peter ſaith, they turn the ſoul into their own nature. Therefore, I will ſhew how this myſtery, Chriſt received up to glory, breeds a frame of godlineſs in the heart.

That it is a myſtery, it will eaſily appear: For, was it a great myſtery, that God ſhould take our nature upon him, to be abaſed in it? Surely, it muſt needs be a myſtery, that God will be glorified in our nature. Was our nature advanced in this incarnation? much more was it glorified in his exaltation, when he carried it to heaven with him. Here was the myſtery of the exaltation of our nature: God was as much abaſed as he could be, being born, and dying for us; our human nature was as much advanced as it could be, when God raiſed it up to heaven: God could be no more abaſed, remaining God; and man's nature can be no more advanced, remaining the true nature of man. This is a great myſtery, the advancement of our nature in Chriſt, who was made lower than the angels; he was a worm,

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and no man: now, our nature in Chriſt, is advanced above the angels. Now, this nature of ours in Chriſt, it is next to the nature of God in dignity; here is a myſtery.

Among many other reſpects, it is a myſtery, for the greatneſs of it. We ſee, after his aſcenſion, when he appeared to Paul in glory, a glimpſe of it ſtruck Paul down, he could not endure it. Nay, before he ſuffered, a very ſhadow of his glory, it amazed, Peter, and James, and John; they could not bear it, they forgot themſelves: "Let us build (ſay they) three tabernacles," &c. If a little diſcovery of his glory on earth, wrought theſe effects; what great glory is it then, that he hath in heaven? Certainly it is beyond all expreſſion.

In this glorious condition that Chriſt is received into, he fulfils all his offices in a moſt comfortable manner. He is a glorious prophet, to ſend his ſpirit now to teach, and open the heart; he is a glorious prieſt, to appear before God, in the holy of holies, in heaven for us, for ever; and he is a king there, for ever; from thence he rules his church, and ſubdues his enemies. So that, though he accompliſhed and fulfilled theſe bleſſed offices (that were appointed him) in the ſtate of humiliation on earth: as it became that ſtate to ſuffer for us; yet it was neceſſary that he ſhould enter into glory, to manifeſt, that he was a king, prieſt, and prophet: for, he was not manifeſted who he was indeed, to our comfort, till he was received up in glory. We had not the ſpirit, the Holy Ghoſt, ſent from above, till he aſcended; as it is in John vii. "The Holy Ghoſt was not given (becauſe Chriſt was not aſcended)," to apply, and to help us to make uſe of Chriſt and all his benefits and riches: ſo that in regard of the manifeſtation of Chriſt's offices, and of application of all the good we have by it, it is by Chriſt received up in glory. To come to ſome application.

Firſt of all, we muſt lay this for a ground and foundation of what follows, that Chriſt aſcended as a public perſon: he muſt not only be conſidered as a particular perſon, alone by himſelf, but as the ſecond Adam: As he took the nature of man, in his incarnation; ſo he aſcended into heaven in it, as a a public perſon; As the firſt Adam was, in whom we all ſinned, and all came to miſery, and baſeneſs, and died; ſo Chriſt muſt be conſidered as the ſecond Adam, as in other things, ſo in his aſcenſion to glory.

In the ſecond place, we muſt know, that there is a wondrous nearneſs

nearneſs between Chriſt and us now; for, before we can think of any comfort by the glory of Chriſt, we muſt be one with him by faith; for, he is the Saviour of his body: therefore, we muſt be in him, we muſt be his members, we muſt be his ſpouſe; and being ſo once, we are one with Chriſt. There is no relation in the world, that is able to expreſs the nearneſs between Chriſt and us ſufficiently: and, therefore, when we ſpeak of Chriſt aſcended into glory, we muſt needs think of ourſelves, and of our glory, and advancement: he was taken up to glory in our nature, not only for himſelf, but for all his. As the huſband of the church, he is gone before, to take up heaven for his wife; as a huſband takes up land in another country for his ſpouſe, though ſhe be not there; Chriſt hath taken up heaven for us: "I go before, to prepare a place for you." So likewiſe he is in heaven as a glorious head, miniſtering virtue and comfort, and ſtrength to all his; all our power and ſtrength, it comes from Chriſt now, as our head in heaven.

Again, there is a cauſalty, the force of a cauſe in this; becauſe Chriſt, therefore we: here is not only a priority of order, but a cauſe likewiſe; and there is great reaſon. Was there the force of a cauſe in Adam, that was but mere man, to convey ſin and miſery, and the diſpleaſure of God to all that are born, and deſcend of him? and is there not the force of a cauſe in the ſecond Adam, to convey grace and glory to his, he being God and man? Therefore, whatſoever is good, it is firſt in Chriſt, and then in us. Chriſt firſt roſe, therefore we ſhall riſe; he aſcended into glory, therefore we ſhall be afterward in glory.

And then we muſt conſider Chriſt, not only as an efficient cauſe, but as a pattern and example, how we ſhall be glorified: he is not only the efficient of all glory within and without, but he is the exemplary cauſe; for all is firſt in him, and then in us: he was firſt abaſed, and ſo muſt we; and then he was glorified, and ſo ſhall we; we muſt be conformable to his abaſement, and then to his glory: he is the firſt fruits of them that ſleep; he being the firſt fruits, we ſucceed. Theſe things being premiſed as grounds, I come to make ſome uſe of this comfortable point.

Uſe I.—Chriſt is received up in glory: Therefore, firſt of all, for our information, we muſt not ſeek him in a wafer-cake, we muſt not look for him in the ſacrament bodily; how can he be there, when he is received up in glory? Therefore, when we

come to the ſacrament, let us conſider, we have now to deal with Chriſt, who is in heaven: Cannot Chriſt ſhew his virtue, to comfort and ſtrengthen us, but we muſt have his body in the communion to touch our bodies? The foot hath influence from the head, yet the head is diſtant from it in place: The utmoſt branches have life and ſap from the root, yet they are remote in reſpect of place. A king ſpreads his influence over his whole kingdom, (tho' it be never ſo large) yet he is but in one place, in reſpect of his perſon. Doth the ſun in the heavens come down to the earth, to make the ſpring, and to make all fruitful? Cannot he ſend beams and influence from thence, to cheriſh the earth? Muſt Chriſt come down in his body to us, or elſe he can do us no good? Muſt there be a corporal deſcent, or elſe we can receive no influence from him? There may be a derivation of virtue from Chriſt, though his perſon be in heaven, where he ſhall remain till the laſt day, when he ſhall come to be glorious in his ſaints. The ſun doth more good, being in heaven, than he could do if he were on the earth; if the ſun were lower, what would become of the earth? But being ſo remote, and ſo far above, he hath opportunity to ſhine over the greateſt part of the earth at once; being greater than the earth, he ſhineth over more than half the earth at once. Chriſt being in heaven, as the ſun of righteouſneſs, he ſhines more gloriously over all; and we have more comfort, and benefit, and influence from Chriſt, now in heaven, than we could, if he were on earth. Muſt we needs make him bodily preſent every where, as the Papiſts do, and other heterodox ſtrange conceited men in Germany. What need we do this, when there may be influence from Chriſt, now in heaven, to us on earth, (as we ſee in other things), without confuſion of his divine properties to his body, or making his body as his Godhead is? Therefore, ſeek him not bodily any where, but in heaven. Thoſe opinions overthrow three articles of our faith at once, "He aſcended into heaven, he ſitteth at the right hand of God, and he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead:" And where is his body in the mean time, in the ſacrament? No: he is received up in glory. Therefore, we muſt have our thoughts in heaven, when we are about that buſineſs, we muſt lift up our hearts, as it is in our liturgy, which is taken out of the ancient liturgy, "We muſt lift them up unto the Lord;" we muſt have holy thoughts raiſed up to Chriſt, in heaven.

Uſe II.—Again, is Chriſt received up to glory? Here is ſingular

gular comfort, conſidering what I ſaid before, that he is aſcended as a public perſon, in our behalf, in our nature, for our good. Therefore, when we think of Chriſt in heaven, think of ourſelves in heaven; "we are ſet together in heavenly places with Chriſt," as the apoſtle ſaith, Epheſ ii. We have a glorious life, but it is hid with Chriſt, in heaven. When Chriſt himſelf ſhall be revealed, our life ſhall be revealed; though we creep upon the earth as worms, yet notwithſtanding we have communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt, who is joined with us in the ſame myſtical body, who is now at the right hand of God in heaven; and he that hath glorified his natural body in heaven, that he took upon him, he will glorify his myſtical body; for, he took fleſh and blood, his natural body, for the glory of his myſtical body, that he might bring his church to glory. Therefore, we ought as verily to believe, that he will take his myſtical body, and every particular member of it to heaven, as he hath taken his natural body, and hath ſet it there in glory.

It is a comfort in the hour of death, that we yield up our ſouls to Chriſt, who is gone before to provide a place for us: this was one end of his taking up to heaven, to provide a place for us: Therefore, when we die, we have not a place to ſeek, our houſe is provided before-hand; Chriſt was taken up to glory, to provide glory for us. Even as paradiſe was provided for Adam, before he was made, ſo we have a heavenly paradiſe provided for us; we had a place in heaven, before we were born. What a comfort is this at the hour of death, and at the death of of our friends, that they are gone to Chriſt, and to glory? We were ſhut out of the firſt paradiſe, by the firſt Adam; our comfort is, that now the heavenly paradiſe in Chriſt, is open: "This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe," ſaith Chriſt to the good thief. There was an angel to keep paradiſe, when Adam was ſhut out; but there is none to keep us out of heaven; nay, the angels are ready to convey our ſouls to heaven, as they did Lazarus; and as they accompanied Chriſt in his aſcenſion to heaven, ſo they do the ſouls of his children.

Likewiſe, in our ſins and infirmities, when we have to deal with God the Father, whom we have offended with our ſins; let us fetch comfort from hence: Chriſt is aſcended into heaven, to appear before his father as a mediator for us; and, therefore, God turns away his wrath from us: we have a friend, a favourite in the court of heaven; the Son of God himſelf, at his Father's right hand, he makes interceſſion for us. As Jo-

nathan appeared in Saul's court, to ſpeak a good word, and to plead for David; ſo our Jonathan, Jeſus Chriſt, (but with far better ſucceſs), appears in the court of heaven for us, continuing our peace with God, in our daily breaches, perfuming our prayers. And there is no danger of his death: for, he is a prieſt for ever at the right hand of God, to make interceſſion for us; his very preſenting himſelf in heaven, ſpeaks for us. As if he ſhould ſay; Theſe perſons that aſk in my name, they were ſuch perſons as I was born for, ſuch as I obeyed for, ſuch as I was ſent into the world to work the great work of redemption for—for he wrought our redemption in his abaſed eſtate; but he applies it, as he is exalted: application is as neceſſary as merit; we have no good by the work of redemption, without application: and for that end he appears in heaven for us, and pleads for us. For, even as there is ſpeech attributed to Abel's blood, it cried, vengeance, vengeance: ſo, Chriſt appearing now in heaven for us, his blood cries, mercy, mercy: theſe are thoſe I ſhed my blood for; mercy, Lord. The very appearing of him that ſhed his blood, it cries for mercy at the throne of mercy, becauſe he is there: he ſhed his blood to ſatisfy juſtice, to make way for mercy.

In the law, the high prieſt, after he had offered a ſacrifice of blood, he was to go into the holy of holies: ſo Chriſt, after he had offered himſelf for a ſacrifice, he went into the holy of holies; into heaven, to appear before God. And as the high-prieſt, when he went into the holy of holies, he had the names of the twelve tribes on his breaſt, to ſhew that he appeared before God for them all: ſo Chriſt being gone into the holy of holies, into heaven, he hath all our names upon his breaſt; that is, in his heart, the name of every particular believer, to the end of the world, to preſent them before God. Therefore, when we have to deal with God, think of Chriſt now glorious in heaven, appearing for us: God can deny him nothing, nor deny us any thing that we aſk in his name; we have his promiſe for it.

It is a ground likewiſe of contentment in all conditions, whatſoever our wants be. What if we want comfort, houſes, &c. on earth; when we have heaven provided for us, and glory provided for us, when we are already ſo glorious in our head? Shall not any condition content a man in this world, that hath ſuch a glorious condition in the eye of faith to enter into? We ſhould not ſo much as look up to heaven, without comfort.

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Yonder is my Saviour, yonder is a houſe provided for me: we ſhould think and look upon heaven, as our own place; whither Chriſt is gone before, and keeps a room for us. Here we may want comforts, we may be thruſt out of houſe and home, out of our habitation and country and all; but all the world, and all the devils in hell, they cannot thruſt us out of heaven, nor diſſolve and break the communion that is between Chriſt and us; they cannot take away either grace or glory from us. Therefore, we ſhould be content with any condition, in this world; Chriſt is aſcended into heaven, to keep a bleſſed condition for us.

Likewiſe, when we think of the troubles of this world; of the enemies we have here; think of Chriſt taken up to glory, and think of Chriſt's order; firſt he ſuffered, and then he entered into glory: ſo we muſt be content to ſuffer firſt, and then be glorious. We are predeſtinated to be conformable to Chriſt, wherein ſtands our conformity? It is in abaſement firſt, and then in glory: Chriſt entered into glory in this order, and ſhall we think to come to heaven in another order than Chriſt did? Shall we wiſh for a ſeparate condition from him? If we be in Chriſt, all that we ſuffer in this world, they are ſufferings of conformity to make us ſuitable to our head, and to fit us for glory. And our greateſt abaſements, what are they to the abaſement of Chriſt? None was ever ſo low, and there is none ſo high: as he was the loweſt in abaſement, ſo he is the higheſt in glory: when he was at the loweſt, in the grave; not only dead, but under the kingdom and command of death; then he roſe gloriously, and aſcended. Our loweſt abaſements, are forerunners of our advancement, and glory; this aſſumption of Chriſt to glory, ſhould help us in this reſpect.

In all diſconſolations there is a world of comfort hence. We muſt not think of Chriſt, as if his honours had changed his manners, (as it is among men) that now he is become ſtately, that he doth not regard his poor church. No ſuch matter: he regards his poor church, now he is in heaven, as much as he ever did. The members here cannot ſuffer any thing, but the head in heaven is ſenſible of it: as it is, Acts ix. "Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?" The foot is trod upon, and the tongue complains. Our bleſſed Saviour is not like Pharaoh's unkind butler, who forgot Joſeph, when himſelf was out of priſon. Chriſt being advanced to honour now, forgets us not here. No: he is as the good Joſeph, who was ſent into Egypt, to provide for all the family before-hand. So this, our Joſeph, the

great Steward of heaven and earth, he is gone to provide for us all, againſt we come to heaven: he forgets us not, he diſdains not to look on things below, he conſiders every poor chriſtian; he is as merciful now, as he was when upon earth: as you have it largely proved, Heb. iv. 7. "He was man for this end, that he might be a merciful high prieſt;" and he is ſo in heaven, and has pity on all our infirmities: it is not as here, out of ſight out of mind; for, (as I ſaid), he hath us in his breaſt: ay, and he is with us, by his ſpirit, to the end of the world. He is taken up to heaven in his body, but his ſpirit, which is his general vicar, is here with us to the end of the world—"I will ſend you the comforter, and he ſhall abide always with you." And it is better for us to have the comforter here, without his bodily preſence, than to have his bodily preſence, without the abundance of his ſpirit: as it was better with the diſciples, when he was taken up to heaven, and was preſent by his ſpirit, than it was before. We loſe nothing therefore by the aſcenſion of Chriſt—it was for us: he was given for us, born for us; he lived for us, he died for us; he roſe, and aſcended to heaven for our good. 'It is good for you that I go;" it was to provide a place for us, and to ſend the comforter: all was for our good, whatſoever he did in his abaſement and exaltation.

Again, this adminiſters comfort, in regard of the afflictions of the church. When the church is under any abaſement, at the loweſt, it hath a glorious head in heaven; and what, doth he ſit there, and do nothing? No, he "ſits at the right hand of God," and rules his church even in the midſt of his enemies If he do give the chain to them, it is for ſpecial ends; his people ſtand in need of all that they endure, and he meaſures it even to a drachm whatſoever his church ſuffers; for they are his members, and he is ſenſible of their ſufferings: He is a high-prieſt, that is touched with our infirmities; therefore, nothing can befal his church, without his government. He lets looſe the enemies thus far, and then he reſtrains them, and ſubdues and conquers them, making them his footſtool. The enemies ſeem to domineer now, and trample on the church; but ere long, they ſhall be the church's footſtool—Chriſt will govern his church, till all his enemies be under his feet. He is aſcended into heaven for this purpoſe, and he is fitting his church, by theſe afflictions, for greater grace in this world, and for eternal glory in the world to come.

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Therefore, let us not take ſcandal at the preſent ſight of things. We ſtand amazed to ſee the ſtate of Europe, at this time; but, for our comfort, let us conſider, that Chriſt is taken to glory, and he ſits in heaven, and rules his church, and will guide all theſe wars to a good and gracious end. He ſits at the ſtern; the ſhip may be toſſed where Chriſt ſleeps, but it cannot be drowned: the houſe that is built upon a rock, it may be blown upon, it ſhall never be overthrown: the buſh wherein the fire is, it may burn, but it ſhall never be conſumed: the church wherein Chriſt rules and governs, it may be toſſed, it ſhall never be overcome and ſubdued. Nay, by all theſe things that the church ſuffers, Chriſt rules and exerciſes his church's graces, and mortifies his church's corruptions. It is neceſſary there ſhould be ſome change: ſtanding waters breed frogs, and other baſe creatures; ſo it is with Chriſtians: if there be not ſome exerciſe by afflictions, what kind of vices grow? As we ſee in theſe times of peace, what kind of lives moſt men live; that we may take up an admiration, that God ſhould be ſo merciful, to continue his truth to a company of proud, baſe, carnal perſons, who lead lives (under the goſpel) no better than if they were in paganiſm. Therefore, we cannot look for any good, without farther abaſement. And, certainly, if troubles come, we ſhould many of us be better than we are now: afflictions would be ſo far from doing us harm, that they would refine us: we ſhall loſe nothing, but that which doth us hurt; that, which we may well ſpare; that which hinders our joy and comfort.

But, I ſay, let us comfort ourſelves, in reſpect of the preſent ſtate of the church: Chriſt rules in the midſt of his enemies, in the midſt of croſſes and perſecutions, not to free us always from them, but he rules, in turning them to good, in ſtrengthening and exerciſing our graces; and he rules in the midſt of his church at this time, by turning his enemies cruelty to the good of the elect. As he ruled in the Iſraelites, when he ſuffered Pharaoh to go on in the hardneſs of his heart; but he had a time for Pharaoh's ruin: ſo Chriſt hath a time for the perſecutors of the church, as he had for all the ten perſecuting emperors, who came to fearful and baſe ends. "Was there ever any man fierce againſt God and proſpered?" ſaith Job. Were there ever any that ſet themſelves againſt the church of God, and proſpered? No, no: It is with the church, as it was with Chriſt; to have looked on Chriſt, hanging and bleeding on the croſs, to have ſeen him grovelling on the ground in the garden, men would be ready to take offence; what; he the

Saviour of the world? But ſtay, and ſee him in the text aſſumed to glory, and then there would be no offence taken at Chriſt. So it is in the Church. You ſee the church ſuffers perſecution: but, lay one thing with another; ſee the church in heaven, with the head of the church; ſee the church advanced, ſee it in glory ere long; ſee it refined, and fitted by ſufferings, to come better out of afflictions than it went in; and then none will take ſcandal at the afflictions of the church, as they ought not at the abaſement of Chriſt: for, though he was God manifeſt in weak fleſh, yet we ſee he aſcended up in glory.

There is a comfortable ſpeech, Jerem. xxx. 7. "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he ſhall be delivered out of it." So we may ſay, this is the time of the church's trouble, but the church ſhall be delivered out of it. The enemies have their time to afflict and trample upon the church, but Chriſt hath his time to trample on them. Let us wait, and expect with comfort, better times. The kingdoms of the world will be known to be the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's; there will be a further ſubjection to Chriſt's kingdom, than ever there was ſince the firſt times, when the fulneſs of the Gentiles, and the converſion of the Jews ſhall be. Let us comfort ourſelves with the times to come; Chriſt is in glory, and he will bring his church to further glory, even in this world, beſides eternal glory at the latter day "Rejoice not over me, oh mine enemy; for though I be fallen, yet ſhall I riſe." Let not the enemies of the church inſult over much; though the church be fallen, yet ſhe ſhall riſe again after three days, ſaith the prophet. Chriſt, though he was abaſed as low as poſſibly he could be, yet after three days he aroſe, ſo the church will riſe out of her troubles after three days, that is, after a certain time (that we know not, but) the exact time is only in the hands of Chriſt; but, certainly, there are glorious times of the church coming.

Conſider the wonderful love of Chriſt, that would ſuſpend his glory ſo long; the glory of heaven was due to him upon his incarnation; by virtue of the union of his human nature with the divine; for, that nature which was united to the Godhead, it muſt needs have right to glory, by that very union. What ſhould hinder, when it was ſo near to God, as to be one perſon, to be taken into the union of the perſon? Oh, but where had our ſalvation been then, if Chriſt had entered into glory upon his incarnation; if he had not ſhed his blood, if he had not been abaſed by the death of the croſs? Therefore the ſchoolmen ſpeak well, he enjoyed the preſence of God *affectione juſti-*

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lie, with the affection of juſtice, and all virtue, that is, he was as gracious from the beginning, from his incarnation; for matter of grace, and love of all that is good; yet not *affectione accommoda*: There was a nearneſs to God in pleaſure and joy, and comfort, this he denied himſelf, till he was aſſumpted to glory after his reſurrection; and this he did in love to us, that he might ſuffer and be abaſed, to work out our ſalvation: that redundance of glory that ſhould have been upon his perſon; preſently upon the union, it was ſtayed till his reſurrection, that he might accompliſh and fulfil our ſalvation. What a mercy and love was this? So it is with the church; it is glorious, as it hath union with Chriſt: Is not the church a glorious thing, that is joined to Chriſt, that is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, the ruler of heaven nd earth? What is the reaſon the church is ſo abaſed then?

If the church were not abaſed, it could not be conformed to Chriſt. Chriſt (that he might work our ſalvation) he muſt be abaſed, and have ſuſpenſion and ſtopping of the glory due to him, till the reſurrection: Of neceſſity we muſt be conformed to Chriſt as far as we may; and that we may be conformed to him, in abaſement, and ſuffering, there muſt be a ſtop of our glory, till we be dead, and turned to duſt, until we riſe again, until Chriſt come to be glorious in his ſaints. If Chriſt (as I formerly ſaid), had ſhewed all his glory in his abaſement, he could never have ſuffered: the devil himſelf would have done him no harm, there would have been no pretence; the Phariſees would never have perſecuted him, and hated him, if they had ſeen him to be ſuch a perſon as he was: but he veiled his glory, that he might ſuffer. If the world did but ſee the thouſand part of the glory that of due belongs to Chriſtians, would they revile them, and diſgrace, and malign, and trample on them? certainly they would not. This is diſcovered in Scripture; but the world (to diſcover their atheiſm, that they believe not the word of God) take no notice of it: And that the children of God may be conformed to their head, and that way be made to the malice of wicked men, to trample upon them, they go in the ſhape of miſerable men.

Therefore, let us not be diſcouraged for any abaſement; we have a glorious life hid with Chriſt, which ſhall be revealed one day: in the mean time, in the midſt of abaſement, let us believe glory. And let me add this to the reſt:

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As the ſame body wherein Chriſt was ſpit upon, and mangled, and crucified, in the ſame body he roſe again, and in the ſame body he aſcended into heaven: ſo it ſhall be with us: the ſame body that ſuffers any thing for Chriſt, the ſame body that dies, the ſame body ſhall riſe, and be aſſumed to glory.

Hence, likewiſe, we have a ground of patience in all our ſufferings from another reaſon, not from the order, but from the certainty of glory: Shall we not patiently ſuffer, conſidering the glory that we ſhall certainly have? If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall be glorified with him. Who will not be patient awhile, that hath ſuch glory in his eye? Therefore, let us look upon the glory of Chriſt, in all our ſufferings whatſoever. What made Moſes, and all the ſaints, in all times to be ſo patient? They had an eye this way. What made Stephen, not only patient, but glorious? His face ſhone as the face of an angel; he looked on Jeſus Chriſt, and ſaw him ſitting at the right hand of God. What made the martyrs not only patient, but triumphant in all their ſufferiugs? They had an eye of faith to ſee Chriſt ſitting in glory, and to ſee themſelves in heaven, glorious in Chriſt, and not only to ſee themſelves glorious in Chriſt, but in themſelves afterwards: We are not only glorious in our head, but we ſhall be ourſelves where he is, taken up in glory.

And let it ſtir us up likewiſe, not to be aſhamed of religion, and to ſtand out in good cauſes for Chriſt, and the church: He is not aſhamed to be called our brother; no, not after his reſurrection: "Go tell my brethren, I aſcend to my Father, and your father." He was not aſhamed of it, when he began in the ſtate of glory; he is not aſhamed of our nature now, to take it up into heaven; he is not aſhamed to own us here, and at the day of judgment to ſet us at his right hand. And ſhall we now for fear of men, for fear of ſhame, for any baſe earthly reſpect, be aſhamed of our glorious head? Do we believe, that we have a head that is glorious in heaven, ſitting at the right hand of God, that ere long will come to judge the quick and the dead; and ſhall we be aſhamed to hold out the profeſſion of religion, for a ſcorn, for a word, for a frown? Where is the ſpirit of glory, the ſpirit that ſhould be in Chriſtians, that hope to be glorious? "He that is aſhamed of me here, (ſaith Chriſt), I will be aſhamed of him at that great day." How can we think, that Chriſt will own us, when we will not own religion here? When we are aſhamed to ſtand for him ſhall we think to ſtand at his right hand? All baſe carnal athe

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ſtical ſpirits that are afraid of diſgrace, of diſpleaſure, of loſs, of any thing but of him they ſhould be afraid of; let them know, that there is no comfort for them in Chriſt's exaltation: For, if they had any communion with Chriſt, he would infuſe another manner of ſpirit into them. Let us therefore ſtand for Chriſt; we have a glorious head, a glorious hope, a glorious inheritance.

And let us go on with encouragement in good duties; with a ſpirit of faith: for, wherefore is Chriſt in heaven, but to rule his church by his ſpirit: "to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men?" Let us therefore go on with confidence, that Chriſt from heaven will give us his ſpirit, to ſubdue our corruption. He is in heaven to rule his church; and what is his kingdom, but the ſubduing of our ſpirits by his ſpirit, to be more humble, and more holy and gracious every way? Let us not think, that our corruptions will be too hard for us, but go on in a ſpirit of faith. That Chriſt, who died for us as a prieſt, he will rule us as a king; if we be true to our own ſouls, we ſhall have ſtrength to ſuſtain us: he ſits in heaven, to rule us by his gracious ſpirit. Let us not deſpair, though we carry this and that corruption about us, we ſhall, by little and little, overcome all; he will lead captivity captive, and overcome all in us, as he did in his own perſon: he that overcame for us, will overcome in us, if there be a ſpirit of faith to depend upon him.

Again, this myſtery is a myſtery of godlineſs; it tendeth to, and enforceth godlineſs, and holineſs of life. Chriſt received up to glory. You ſee then our fleſh is in heaven. Chriſt hath taken into heaven the pledge of our fleſh, and given us the pledge of his ſpirit. It was a dignifying of our nature, that God ſhould be manifeſt in our fleſh; that which was an abaſing to him, as God was an honour to our nature; the incarnation of Chriſt it was the beginning of his abaſement, in regard of his Godhead, for the Godhead to be clouded under fleſh; but it was a dignifying of the human nature, that it ſhould be grafted into the ſecond perſon: And is it not a greater honour to our nature, that now in Chriſt it is gone to heaven, and is there above angels? Our nature in Chriſt rules over all the world: And wherefore is all this? As it is for wondrous comfort, ſo for inſtruction, to carry ourſelves anſwerable to our dignity. What! hath God taken our nature upon him, to the unity of the econd perſon, and exalted and honoured and enriched it? Is

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he likewiſe gone to heaven in our nature, and is there, above all principalities and powers; all the angels in heaven attend upon him: And ſhall we debaſe and diſhonour our nature, that is ſo exalted? Let it work upon us, to carry ourſelves in a holy kind of ſtate. Shall we defile ourſelves with ſinful courſes, and make ourſelves baſer than the earth we tread on, worſe than any creature? for a man without grace is next to the devil in miſery, if God be not merciful to him. If God have thus honoured our nature, above all created excellency whatſoever, ſhall not this ſtir us up to a correſpondent carriage? It is oft preſſed by the apoſtle, that we walk worthy of our calling. And, indeed, let us oft conſider to what great matters we are called; for, the life of heaven it muſt be begun upon earth: Whoſoever hath this hope, to be glorious with Chriſt in heaven, it purgeth him, it frames him to be like the ſtate he hopes for; and he that hath not a care to ſuit and fit his carriage and diſpoſition to the ſtate he believes, it is an empty hope, he deludes himſelf. Whoſoever ſhall be glorious with Chriſt in heaven, is alſo glorious now, there is a ſpirit of glory reſting upon them, that is grace, grace makes them glorious. Thoſe that have not a ſpirit of glory, that is, a ſpirit of grace, to faſhion and conform them, in ſome meaſure, to be like Chriſt, by little and little; they have no right nor intereſt in the ſtate of glory, that ſhall be revealed hereafter.

Is Chriſt taken up to glory, and for us, as well as for himſelf: what manner of men ought we to be in holy converſation? We ſhould keep ourſelves unſpotted of the wicked world. Shall we think to have communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt in glory, when we make the members of Chriſt the members of an harlot? when we make our tongues inſtruments of blaſpheming God, and Chriſt; as a company of vile wretches, that will come to the ordinances of God, and yet have not overcome their atheiſtical nature ſo much, as to leave their ſwearing, and filthy courſes? Do we think to have communion with Chriſt in glory, and not get the victory over theſe baſe courſes? Do we profeſs ourſelves to be Chriſtians, and live like pagans? Hath God ſuch need of people to fill heaven with, that he will have ſuch unclean perſons? Shall we have ſuch baſe thoughts of heaven? No, beloved, theſe things muſt be left, if ever (upon good ground) we will entertain thoughts of fellowſhip in this glory. There is a new heaven, and a new earth for the new creature, and only for ſuch. Let us not delude ourſelves: there

there must be a correspondence between the head and the members, not only in glory but in grace; and the conformity in grace is before the conformity in glory. Will God overturn his method, and order, for our sakes? No, no: all that come to heaven he guides them by his spirit, here, in grace, and then he brings them to glory. He gives grace and glory, and no good thing shall be wanting to them who lead a godly life: but first grace, and then glory.

Therefore, let not the devil abuse us, nor our own false hearts, to pretend a share in this glory, when we find no change in ourselves, when we find not so much strength, as to get the victory over the base and vile corruptions of the world. The apostle, from this ground, infers mortification of our earthly members: You are risen with Christ, your life is hid with Christ in God; and, we are dead with Christ: Therefore, we ought to mortify all sinful lusts. For, the soul being finite, it cannot be carried up to these things that are of a spiritual, holy, and divine consideration; but it must die in its love and affection, and care to earthly things, and sinful courses. Therefore let us never think that we believe these things indeed, unless we find a disposition by grace, to kill and subdue all things that are contrary to this condition. Though somewhat there will be in us, to humble us; or else, why are precepts of mortification given to them who were saints already, but that there is somewhat will draw us down to abase us? But this is no comfort to him that is not the child of God, that lives in filthy courses that he might easily command himself in? let him abandon the name of a Christian, he hath no interest in the comfort of this, that Christ is received up to glory.

Again, the mystery of Christ's glory it tends to glory in this respect, to stir us up to heavenly-mindedness. The apostle doth divinely enforce this in the forenamed place, Coloss. iii. 1. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above." From our communion with Christ, rising and ascending into heaven, and and sitting there in glory, he enforceth heavenly-mindedness; that our thoughts should be where our glory is, where our head and husband is: and, certainly, there is nothing in the world more strong, to enforce a heavenly mind than this: to consider where we are, in our head. Christ, our head and husband, is taken up into glory; there is our inheritance, there are a great many of our fellow-brethren, there is our country, there is our happiness. We are for heaven, and not for this world: this is but a

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paſſage to that glory, that Chriſt hath taken up for us; and therefore, why ſhould we have our minds grovelling here upon the earth? Certainly if we have intereſt in Chriſt, who is in glory at the right hand of God, it is impoſſible but our ſouls will be raiſed to heaven in our affections before we be there in our bodies. All that are Chriſtians, they are in heaven in their ſpirit and converſation before-hand; our heavy, dull, earthly ſouls, being touched by his ſpirit, they will aſcend up. The iron, when it is touched with the loadſtone, (though it be an heavy body) it aſcends up to the loadſtone, it follows it. The ſun it draws up vapours, that are heavy bodies of themſelves. Chriſt, as the loadſtone, being in heaven, he had an attractive force to draw us up. There is not the earthlieſt diſpoſition in the world, if our hearts were as heavy as iron, if we have communion with Chriſt, and have our hearts once touched by his ſpirit, he will draw us up, though of ourſelves we be heavy and lumpiſh. This meditation, that Chriſt our head is in glory, and that we are in heaven in him, and that our happineſs is there, it will purge and refine us from our earthlineſs, and draw up our iron heavy cold hearts.

It is an argument of a great deal of atheiſm and infidelity in our hearts, (as indeed our baſe nature is prone to ſink down, and to be carried away with preſent things) that profeſſing to believe that Chriſt is riſen, and aſcended into heaven, and that he is there for us; yet that we ſhould be plodding and plotting altogether for the earth: as if there were no other heaven, as if there were no happineſs but that which is to be found below. There is nothing here that can ſatisfy the capacious nature of man; therefore, we ſhould not reſt in any thing here, conſidering the great things that are reſerved for us, where Chriſt is in glory. Therefore, when we find our ſouls falling down of themſelves, or drawn downward, to baſe cares, and earthly contentments, by any thing here below; let us labour to raiſe up ourſelves with ſuch meditations: I know not any more fruitful than to conſider the glory to come, and the certainty of it. Chriſt is taken into glory, not for himſelf only, but for all his; for, "Where I am, (ſaith he), it is my will that they be there alſo." Chriſt ſhould loſe his prayer, if we ſhould not follow him to heaven: it is not only his prayer, but his will; and he is in heaven to make good his will. The wills of men may be fruſtrated, becauſe they are dead; but he lives to make good his own will; and his will is, that we be where he is. Now, if a man

man believe this, can he be baſe and earthly minded? Certainly, no; Where our treaſure is, our hearts will be there alſo, by the rule of Chriſt, where the body is, the eagles will reſort: if we did make theſe things our treaſure, we would mount above earthly things; there is nothing in the world would be ſufficient for us, if we had that eſteem of Chriſt, and the glory where Chriſt is, as we ſhould and might have.

And it is not only meditation of theſe things, that will cauſe us to be heavenly-minded; but Chriſt, as a head of influence in heaven, conveys ſpiritual life, to draw us up: "When I am aſcended, I will draw all men after me." There is a virtue from Chriſt, that doth it; there is neceſſity of the cauſe and conſequence, as well as ſtrength of reaſon and equity; there is an influence iſſuing from Chriſt our head, to make us ſo indeed: therefore, thoſe that are otherwiſe, they may thank themſelves. The beſt of us, (indeed) have cauſe to be abaſed, that we betray our comfort, and the means that we have of raiſing up our dead and dull hearts, for want of meditation. Let us but keep this faith in exerciſe, that Chriſt is in heaven in glory, and we in him are in heaven as verily as if we were there in our perſons, as we ſhall be ere long, and then let us be uncomfortable, and baſe, and earthly-minded, if we can.

To conclude all: As the ſoul of man is firſt ſinful, and then ſanctified; firſt humble, and then raiſed: ſo our meditations of Chriſt muſt be in this order; firſt, think of Chriſt, as abaſed and crucified; for the firſt comfort that the ſoul hath, is in Chriſt manifeſted in the fleſh, before it come to be received up into glory. Therefore, if we would have comfortable thoughts of this, Chriſt received up in glory, think of him firſt manifeſted in the fleſh: let us have recourſe in our thoughts to Chriſt, in the womb of the virgin; to Chriſt born, and lying in the manger; going up and down doing good; hungering and thirſting, ſuffering in the garden, ſweating water and blood, nailed on the croſs, crying to his father, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me;" finiſhing all upon the croſs, lying three days in the grave: have recourſe to Chriſt thus abaſed, and all for us, to expiate our ſin; he obeyed God to ſatisfy for our diſobedience. Oh, here will be comfortable thoughts for a wounded ſoul, pierced with the ſenſe of ſin, aſſaulted by Satan; to think thus of Chriſt, abaſed for our ſins; and then to think of him taken up into glory.

In

In the Sacrament, our thoughts muſt eſpecially have recourſe, in the firſt place, to Chriſt's body broken, and his blood ſhed, as the bread is broken, and the wine poured out; that we have benefit by Chriſt's abaſement and ſuffering, by ſatisfying his father's wrath, and reconciling us to God. Then think of Chriſt in heaven, appearing there for us, keeping that happineſs that he hath purchaſed by his death for us, and applying the benefit of his death to our ſouls by his ſpirit, which he is able to ſhed more abundantly, being in that high and holy place, heaven; for, the ſpirit was not given in that abundance, before Chriſt was aſcended to glory, as it hath been ſince. In this manner, and order, we ſhall have comfortable thoughts of Chriſt. To think of his glory in the firſt place, it would dazzle our eyes, it would terrify us, being ſinners, to think of his glory, being now aſcended: but when we think of him, as deſcended firſt, as he ſaith, "Who is he that aſcended, but he that deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth:" So, who is this that is taken up in glory; is it not he that was manifeſt in our fleſh before? This will be comfortable. Therefore, let us firſt begin with Chriſt's abaſement, and then we ſhall have comfortable thoughts of his exaltation.

Theſe points are very uſeful, being the main grounds of religion; having an influence upon our lives and converſations above all others: other points have their life and vigour, and quickening from theſe grand myſteries, which are the food of the ſoul. Therefore, let us oft feed our thoughts with theſe things of Chriſt's abaſement and glory, conſidering him in both, as a public perſon, the ſecond Adam, and our ſurety; and then ſee ourſelves in him, and labour to have virtue from him, fitting us in body and ſoul for ſuch a condition. The very ſerious meditation of theſe things, will put a glory upon our ſouls; and the believing of them will transform us from glory to glory.

ANGELS

ANGELS ACCLAMATIONS:

OR, THE

NATIVITY OF CHRIST,

CELEBRATED BY THE HEAVENLY HOST.

LUKE ii. 13, 14.

"*And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly* "*hoſt, praiſing God, and saying—Glory to God in the higheſt, and* "*on earth peace, good will towards men.*"

THE words are few and pregnant, very precious, having much excellency in a little quantity. The heavens never opened but to great purpoſe; when God opens his mouth, it is for ſome ſpecial end; and when the angels appeared, it was upon ſome extraordinary occaſion. This was the moſt glorious apparition that ever was, ſetting aſide that which was at Chriſt's baptiſm, when the heavens opened, and the Father ſpake, and the Holy Ghoſt appeared in the likeneſs of a dove, upon the head of Chriſt: then all the Trinity appeared; but there was never ſuch an apparition of angels, as at this time; and there never was ſuch a ground for it, whether we regard the matter itſelf, the incarnation of Chriſt, there was ever ſuch a thing from the beginning of the world, nor ever ſhall be in this world, for God to take man's nature on him, for heaven and earth to join together, for the Creator to become a creature.

Or whether we regard the benefit that comes to us thereby; Chriſt by this means brings God and man together ſince the fall; Chriſt is the accompliſhment of all the propheſies, of all the promiſes, they were made in him, and for him, therefore he was the expectation of the Gentiles. Before

he was born, he was revealed by degrees. Firſt, generally, "the ſeed of the woman," &c. Then, more particularly, "to Abraham and his ſeed," and then to one tribe, Judah, that he ſhould come of him; then to one family, the houſe of David; and then, more particularly, "a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon," and the place, Bethlehem, till at the laſt John Baptiſt pointed him out with the finger, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſins of the world." Even, as after midnight, the ſun grows up by little and little, till his beams ſtrike forth in the morning, and after it appears in glory; ſo it was with the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as he came nearer, ſo he diſcovers himſelf more glorioufly by degrees, till he was born indeed, and then you ſee here a multitude of angels celebrate his nativity.

Now as before his birth, he was revealed by degrees, ſo after his incarnation, he was revealed to all ſorts, to women, in Anna, a propheteſs, to wiſe men, and to ſilly ſhepherds, to all ranks of men; and to whomſoever the incarnation of Chriſt was revealed, when he was born, they all entertained it with joy. The angels they ſang and praiſed God; Simeon was even content then to die; and Zachary you ſee before hand breaks forth, "Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael," &c. and the ſhepherds went away rejoicing. There is a ſpecial paſſage of divine providence in the carriage of this manifeſtation, for Chriſt was revealed to the wiſe men that were Gentiles, by a ſtar, becauſe they were given to ſtar-gazing; he was diſcovered to the ſhepherds by the apparitions of angels; the Scribes, who were converſant in ſcripture, found it out by ſearching the ſcriptures. God applies himſelf to every man's condition.

And ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude, &c.

You ſee here, although, Chriſt lay in the humble manger; yet, notwithſtanding, there were ſome circumſtances, that ſhewed the greatneſs of his perſon, that he was no ordinary perſon; he lay in the manger indeed, but the wiſe men came and adored him; and appeared to the ſhepherds, poor men, yet notwithſtanding, here is an hoſt of angels that praiſe him; ſo, likewiſe, at his death, he converted the good thief, and overſhadowed the ſun itſelf, and then he gloriously roſe again; ſo that there were ſome beams of his divine nature that brake

forth

forth in all his abaſements; we ſee here an apparition of angels. In the words conſider theſe things.

Here is, firſt of all, an apparition of heavenly angels.

And then the celebration of Chriſt's birth.

The apparition—" and ſuddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt."

The celebration of it—" praiſing God and ſaying—"

The matter of the celebration—" and praiſing God."

Glory to God in the higheſt,

On earth peace,

Good will towards men.

I ſhall eſpecially ſtand upon thoſe words, but ſomewhat is to be touched concerning the apparition of theſe angels.

The circumſtances of their apparition, they appear to poor ſhepherds.

God reſpects no callings.

He will confound the pride of men, that ſet ſo much by that, which God ſo little reſpects, and to comfort men in all conditions.

Again, the angels appeared to them in the midſt of their buſineſs and callings; and indeed God's people, as Moſes and others, have had the ſweeteſt intercourſe with God in their affairs; and oftentimes it is the fitteſt way to hinder Satan's temptation, and to take him off, to be employed in buſineſs, rather than to ſtruggle with temptations; we many times meet with comfort in our buſineſs, in our callings, that without it, in ſpeculation and otherwiſe, we ſhould never have.

And then they appeared to them in the night.

God diſcovers himſelf in the night of affliction.

Our ſweeteſt and ſtrongeſt comforts are in our greateſt miſeries: God's children find light in darkneſs; nay, God brings light out of darkneſs itſelf. We ſee the circumſtances then of this apparition.

He calls these angels a heavenly host, in divers respects, especially in these:

An host for number, here are a number set down. A multitude is distinct from an host, but in that they are an host, they are a multitude, as in Dan. vii. 10. "Ten thousand times ten thousand angels attend upon God." And so Rev. v. 11. There are a world of angels about the church: in Heb. xii. 22. we are to have communion with an innumerable company of angels: he sets not down the number, and here appears a multitude of angels. Worldly sottish men, who live here below, they think there is no other state of things than they see, they are only taken up with sense, and pleasures, and goodly shew of things; alas, poor souls, there is another manner of state and frame of things, if they had spiritual eyes to see the glory of God, and of Christ our Saviour, and their attendants there, an host, a multitude of heavenly angels.

An host likewise implies order, or else it is a rout, not an host or army; God is the God of order, not of confusion. If you would see disorder, go to hell; surely disordered places and companies, are rather hells, than any thing else; nay, in some respects, worse; for there is a kind of order even among the devils themselves, they join together to destroy the church, and the members thereof. I note this by the way: here was an host of angels, that is, they are an orderly company: what that order is, I confess with St. Austin, is undetermined in Scripture. We must not rashly presume to look into these things.

Again, here is consent, an host all joining together in praising God, "Glory to God on high." And sure it is a heaven upon earth, when a company of Christians, led with one spirit, shall join in one work to praise God, to help one another in some spiritual way, when they meet together to hear the word, and to pray to God, all with one consent, their prayers meet in heaven. Christ commends union, and consent; "Where two or three are met together in my name, I will be in the midst of them; and whatsoever two or three shall ask in my name, if they agree (if there be no jarring, nor schism, nor breach among them) I will grant it:" Agreement in good, is a notable resemblance of that glorious condition we shall enjoy in heaven; this multitude of angels, they all agree with one consent.

An host of angels, it shews likewise their employment; an host

hoſt is for defence or offence, that is the employment of angels here below eſpecially, for the defence of the church, and for the offence of the enemies of the church: It is a great comfort to the church, and children of God; the church is in the midſt of devils, and devils incarnate, deviliſh minded men, that are led with the ſpirit of the devil; but here is our comfort, we have a multitude, an hoſt of angels, whoſe office is to defend the church, and to offend the enemies of the church, as we ſee in ſcripture.

Again, an hoſt implies ſtrength; we have a ſtrong garriſon, and guard, we are kings in Chriſt, and we have need of a guard, and God hath appointed us a ſtrong guard, a guard of angels. Angels ſeverally are ſtrong creatures, we ſee one of them deſtroyed all the firſt born in Egypt, one of them deſtroyed the hoſt of Sennacherib the Aſſyrian in one night: If one angel deſtroyed a whole hoſt, conſiſting of many thouſands, what can a multitude of heavenly angels do? Yet all are for the ſervice of Chriſt, and of his church; theſe and ſuch like obſervations we may gather hence, that they are ſaid to be an hoſt of angels.

Beloved, we have need of ſuch comforts, and let it not ſeem ſlight unto us, to hear of angels, becauſe we ſee them not; it is a thing forgotten of us too much. Why are we ſo cold, and dead, and dull, and diſtruſtful in dangers? we forget our ſtrength and comfort this way. There is now, at this time, an earthly hoſt againſt the church, men led with antichriſtian ſpirits; Let us comfort ourſelves, we have an heavenly hoſt with us, as Elizeus ſaid to his ſervant, "there are more with us than againſt us." If God ſee it good, this outward hoſt of heaven, the ſun, the moon, the ſtars, he can make them fight for his church, as in Siſera's caſe. But there is another hoſt, that ſee the face of God, that is, that obſerve and wait on his will, and command, we have an heavenly hoſt within the heavens, that having a command from God, can come down quickly for the defence of the church, and for every particular chriſtian, not only one angel, that is but an opinion that every one hath his angel, but even as God ſees good, one or two, or more, a multitude, an hoſt of angels.

God uſeth angels, not for any defect of power in himſelf to do things, that he muſt have ſuch an hoſt, but for the further demonſtration of his goodneſs; he is ſo diffuſive in goodneſs,

he will have a multitude of creatures, that they may be a means to diffuſe his goodneſs, angels to the church, and the church to others, it is for the ſpreading of his goodneſs, for he is all in all himſelf. Let it make impreſſion in us, that we have ſuch glorious creatures for our ſervice.

We ſee here this hoſt of heavenly angels, they attend upon the Lord of hoſts at his birth: for Chriſt is the creator of angels, the Lord of them, not only as God, but as mediator; as God, he is the creator of angels; as mediator, he is the head of angels, Col. i. 16. It was fit, therefore, that an hoſt of angels ſhould attend upon the Lord of angels. It was for the honour of Chriſt. God would let the world know, (altho' they heeded it not, there was no ſuch thought in Auguſtus' court at that time), that there was an excellent glorious perſon, born into the world, God himſelf took our nature, Chriſt, Emanuel, though he were neglected of the world, and fain to ly in a manger; yet God took better notice of him than ſo, heaven took notice of him, when earth regarded him not: therefore God, to ſhew that he had another manner of reſpect and regard to Chriſt, than the world had, he ſends a multitude, an hoſt of heavenly angels, to celebrate the nativity of Chriſt.

There is much ſolemnity at the birth of princes, and God, who is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, he makes a ſolemnity likewiſe at the birth of his ſon, the greateſt ſolemnity that ever was, an hoſt of heavenly angels. But theſe things I do but touch.

And ſuddenly there was, &c.

Suddenly, in an unperceivable time, yet in time, for there is no motion in a moment, no creature moves from place to place in a moment, God is everywhere: Suddenly, it not only ſhews us ſomewhat exemplary from the quick diſpatch of the angels in their buſineſs; we pray to God, in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," that is willingly, ſuddenly, cheerfully.

But alſo it ſerves for comfort. If we be in any ſudden danger, God can diſpatch an angel, a multitude of angels to encamp about us ſuddenly; therefore, though the danger be preſent, and the devil preſent, and deviliſh-minded men preſent to hurt us, God hath a multitude, an hoſt of angels as preſent to defend us,

us; nay, as he himself is everywhere, so in the midst of his church, he is present more than angels can be, he is not only among us, but he is in us by his spirit, to comfort and strengthen us, therefore let us stir up the spirit of God in us, in all difficulties and dangers whatsoever, considering we have such grounds of comfort every way.

What is the use and end of this glorious apparition, in regard to the poor shepherds? to confirm their faith, and in them ours, for if one or two witnesses confirm a thing, what shall a multitude do? If one or two men confirm a truth, much more an host of heavenly angels. Therefore, it is base infidelity to call this in question, which is confirmed by a multitude of angels, and to comfort them likewise in this apparition; we see, that for one Christian to confirm and comfort another, it is the work of an angel, an angelical work; for one man to discourage another, it is the work of a devil. When Christ was in his agony, the angels appeared to comfort him; we may take notice how willing and ready these glorious spirits were to attend upon our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, in all the passages from his incarnation to his glory: we see they appeared at his incarnation, they ministered unto him after his temptation, at his resurrection, then they were ready to attend him; and at his ascension, they were ready then; but oh the welcome when he ascended into heaven! There were the glorious embracings, when all the host of heaven entertained him at his ascension: In the garden, as I said, they comforted him; let us imitate them in this blessed work, if there be any distress that need comfort and consolation: we love examples of great and noted persons, here you have examples of great and noted persons, here you have an example above yourselves, the example of angels, who to confirm and comfort the shepherds, appear in an host, a multitude of heavenly angels. The angels, as they attend upon Christ; so for his sake they attend upon us too, for he is that Jacob's ladder. Jacob's ladder you know stood upon earth, but it reached to heaven, and the angels went up and down upon the ladder, that is, it is Christ that knits heaven and earth together, God and man, and the angels by Christ, have communion and fellowship with us, as I noted out of the place, Heb xii. 22. "We are come to an innumerable company of angels;" so that they attend upon us for Christ's sake, whose members we are, they attend upon Christ mystical, as well as Christ natural: "For they are ministering spirits for the sake of them that shall be saved," Heb.

1. And therefore in our childhood, and tender years, they have the cuſtody of us committed to them, as Chriſt ſaith, "Their angels behold the face of God." and in our dangers they pitch their tents about us, and at our death, they carry our ſouls to the place of happineſs, as they carried Lazarus' ſoul into Abraham's boſom; and at the reſurrection, they ſhall gather our dead bodies together; ſo that as they never left our bleſſed Saviour from his birth to his aſcenſion, ſo they always attend upon his members, his ſpouſe; for his ſake we have communion with the bleſſed angels. Theſe things may be of ſome uſe; but it is not what I mainly intend. Thus much for the apparition.

Now the celebration is—a "multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing God."

The word ſignifies ſinging, as well as praiſe, it implies praiſe expreſſed in that manner, and indeed praiſing God, it is the beſt expreſſion of the affection and joy. The angels were joyful at the birth of Chriſt their Lord. Joy is no way better expreſſed, than in praiſing God, and it is a pity that ſuch expreſſion as joy ſhould run into any other ſtream, if it were poſſible, than the praiſing God. He hath planted this affection of joy in the creature, and it is fit he ſhould reap the fruit of his own garden; it is a pity that a clear ſtream ſhould run into a puddle; it ſhould rather run into a garden, and ſo ſweet and excellent affection as joy, it is a pity it ſhould be employed otherwiſe than in praiſing God, and doing good to men.

They expreſs their joy in a ſuitable expreſſion in praiſing God; the ſweeteſt affection in man, ſhould have the ſweeteſt employment, the ſweeteſt employment that joy can have, is to be enlarged in love, to praiſe God, and, for God's ſake, to do good to others.

See here the pure nature of angels, they praiſe God for us. We have more good by the incarnation of Chriſt than they have, yet notwithſtanding ſuch is their humility, that they come down with great delight from heaven, and praiſe, and glorify God, for the birth of Chriſt, who is not their, but our redeemer. Some ſtrength they have, there is no creature but hath ſome good by the incarnation of Chriſt; even the angels themſelves, yet however they have ſome ſtrength from Chriſt, in the increaſe of the number of the church, yet he is not the redeemer of angels; in ſome ſort he is the head of angels, but he is

our

our redeemer—"To us a child is born, to us a ſon is given." And yet ſee, their nature is ſo pure, and ſo clear from envy and pride, and they even glorify God for the goodneſs ſhewn to us, meaner creatures than themſelves, and they envy not us, though we be advanced by the incarnation of Chriſt, to a higher place than they: For, beloved, the very angels have not ſuch affinity to Chriſt in this, as we; they are not the ſpouſe of Chriſt, they make not up myſtical Chriſt, as the church doth; the church is the queen, as Chriſt is the king of all, it is married to Chriſt; angels are not; and yet although they ſee us advanced in divers reſpects above them, yet they are ſo pure, and free from envy, that they join in praiſing God, here, in love to us.

Let us labour, therefore, for diſpoſitions angelical, that is, ſuch as may delight in the good of others, and in the good of others meaner than ourſelves.

And learn this alſo from them, ſhall they glorify God for our good eſpecially, and ſhall we be dull, and cold in praiſing God, on our own behalf? Shall they come ſuddenly from heaven, and cheerfully and willingly, and to praiſe God for his goodneſs to us, and ſhall we be frozen and cold in this duty, which is for our good more eſpecially? I haſten to that which follows.

What is the matter of their celebration and gratulation?

"Glory to God in the higheſt;"

"On earth peace,"

"Good will towards man."

There is ſome difference in the readings, ſome copies have it, "On earth peace, to men of good will," to men of God's will; and ſo they would have it two branches, not three; if the word be rightly underſtood, it is no great matter.

Firſt, the angels begin with the main and chief end of all; it is God's end, it is the angels end, and it ſhould be ours too, "Glory to God on high."

Then they wiſh the chief good of all, that whereby we are fitted for the main end, peace. God cannot be glorified on earth, unleſs there be peace wrought: for man elſe conceives God as an enemy; by this peace we are fitted to glorify God. If we find reconciliation with God through Jeſus Chriſt, then the ſenſe of God's love, in the work of reconciliation, will enflame

flame our hearts to glorify God, therefore, next to the glory of God, they wish peace on earth.

Then, thirdly, here is the ground of all happiness, from whence this peace comes, from God's good will, from his good pleasure, or free grace, "to men of God's good will." So if we go back again, the good will and pleasure of God, is the cause and ground of peace in Christ, and peace in Christ puts us into a condition, and stirs us up to glorify God; so we see there is an order in these three.

To begin with the first,

Glory to God in the highest.

The angels, those blessed and holy spirits, they begin with that which is the end of all, it is God's end, in all things his own glory, he hath none above himself, whose glory to aim at. And they wish glory to God, in the highest heavens.

Indeed he is more glorified there, than any where in the world; it is the place where his majesty most appears; and, the truth is, we cannot perfectly glorify God, till we be in heaven; there is pure glory given to God in heaven—there is no corruption there in those perfect souls, there is perfect glory given to God in heaven. Here upon earth, God is not glorified at all by many. The whole life of many, being nothing but a dishonouring God, by abusing his ordinances, trampling upon his church and children, by slighting his word, and sacraments. There is little honour given to God in the world, but only by a few, whom he intends to glorify for ever; and indeed, if we will glorify God here, we must raise our thoughts to heaven at that time, raise them above the world, to heaven, where we shall for ever glorify him, where we shall join with the blessed saints and angels, and sing, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, &c. In the mean time, let me add this by the way, that in some sort we glorify God more in earth than in heaven. It may seem a paradox, but it is true, that is this, here upon earth we glorify God in the midst of enemies; he hath no enemies in heaven, they are all of one spirit: here, upon earth, we live not only among devils, but among men led with the spirit of the devil, where God is dishonoured; and, if here we take God's side, and the truth, and gospel's side, and stand for God's cause, in some sort we honour God more here than we are capable to do it in heaven, where there is no opposition. In this respect,

reſpect, let us be encouraged to glorify God, what we can here; for, if we begin to glorify God here, it is a ſign we are of the number that he intends to glorify with him for ever.

The word is not ſet down here whether it ſhould be, Glory is given to God, or whether, by way of wiſhing, Let glory be given to God, or by way of prediction, or prophecy for the time to come, Glory ſhall be to God, from hence to the end of the world, the verb being wanting, but all truth. For, firſt, it cannot be a wiſh, unleſs it were a poſitive doctrinal truth, that all glory is due to God in the incarnation of Chriſt; and, becauſe all glory is to him, thereupon comes the ground of wiſhing and of prayer, "Let God be glorified," why? becauſe it is due; if it were not a poſitive doctrinal truth, there could be no foundation to raiſe a wiſh, or a prayer, for, what is a prayer, but the turning of a promiſe or truth into a prayer? and what is praiſe, but the turning of a truth into praiſe? ſo it is a doctrinal truth, firſt, that God is to be glorified eſpecially in Chriſt, and in Chriſt, in this particular, eſpecially in the incarnation of Chriſt. And it is a wiſh for the time to come, let him be glorified, and a prediction, God ſhall be glorified in the church, he ſhall always have ſome to glorify him for Chriſt, and eſpecially for his incarnation.

Glory to God on high.

Glory is excellency, greatneſs, and goodneſs, with the eminency of it, ſo as it may be diſcovered. There is a fundamental glory, in things that are not diſcovered at all times, God is always glorious; but, alas, few have eyes to ſee it; but here I take it for the excellency and eminency of the goodneſs and greatneſs of God, diſcovered and taken notice of. In the former part of the chapter, light is called the glory of the Lord. Light is a glorious creature, nothing expreſſeth glory ſo much as light; it is a ſweet creature, but it is a glorious creature; it carries its evidence in itſelf, it diſcovers all other things, and itſelf too. So excellency and eminency will diſcover itſelf to thoſe who have eyes to ſee it, and being manifeſted, and withal taken notice of, is glory.

In that the angels begin with the glory of God, I might ſpeak of this doctrine, that

"The glory of God, the ſetting forth the excellencies, and eminencies

eminencies of the Lord, ſhould be the end of our lives, the chief thing we ſhould aim at."

The angels here begin with it, and we begin with it in the Lord's prayer, "hallowed be thy name," it ſhould be our chief employment, "of him and by him are all things, therefore to him be glory," Rom. xi. Therefore, we ſhould give God that which is his own, "thine is the glory," as it is in the concluſion of the Lord's prayer; but this being a general point, I will paſs it by, and come to the particular, in which, it will more comfortably appear, as this glory ſhines in Chriſt, in the incarnation of Chriſt, there is matter of glorifying God, both to angels and men.

And here I do not take the incarnation of Chriſt, abſtractedly, from other things in Chriſt. But I take the incarnation of Chriſt, as a foundation and prerequiſite to all the other good we have by Chriſt, glory to God on high, now Chriſt is born—why? only that he is born? no, but by reaſon of this incarnation, there is a union of the two natures, God and man; ſo that by the incarnation, now Chriſt is man, and holy man, the human nature in Chriſt is pure, and holy, being ſanctified by the ſpirit, and united to God; now Chriſt being not only man, but pure man, and Godman (God taking our nature to the unity of his perſon) hence it is that he comes to be qualified for all that he did, and ſuffered after; it was from hence, that they had their worth. What was the reaſon that his being made a curſe, and to die for us, ſhould be of ſuch worth? It came from a perſon that was God-man; nay, ſo near is the manhood to God, that what the manhood did, God did, becauſe the perſon was God, the ſecond perſon taking the nature of man, and what he ſuffered in his human nature, God ſuffered according to man's nature: hence comes that the phraſe of the communication of properties, whatever was done or ſuffered in man's nature, God did as a mediator, God did it in that nature, thereupon comes the price of it; thus the incarnation is a prerequiſite, and foundation to all other benefits by Chriſt, therefore take it conjoined, his incarnation, and his death, and reſurrection, and aſcenſion, and all.

Well then, the incarnation of Chriſt, together with the benefits to us by it, that is, redemption, adoption, &c. it is that wherein God will ſhew his glory moſt of all.

That is the doctrinal truth; the glory and excellency of God doth

doth moſt ſhine in his love and mercy in Chriſt. Every excellency of God hath its proper place or theatre, where it is ſeen, as his power in the creation, his wiſdom in his providence and ruling of the world, his juſtice in hell, his majeſty in heaven; but his mercy and kindneſs, his bowels of tender mercy, do moſt of all appear in his church among his people. God ſhews the excellency of his goodneſs and mercy in the incarnation of Chriſt, and the benefits we have by it; many attributes and excellencies of God ſhine in Chriſt, as,

His truth, "All the promiſes of God, are, yea, and amen, in Chriſt," there is an accompliſhment of all the promiſes.

And then his wiſdom, that he could reconcile juſtice and mercy, by joining two natures together, this plot was in heaven by God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, the Trinity, that God and man ſhould be joined together, to join and knit two attributes, ſeemingly contrary, juſtice and mercy, to reconcile man, by reconciling juſtice and mercy; and by ſuch an excellent way, that God ſhould become man, Emanuel, this was a great wiſdom to reconcile juſtice and mercy, by ſuch a perſon as ſhould ſatisfy juſtice, and give way to mercy, that is, by Chriſt. God will loſe none of his attributes, his juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, that his mercy might be manifeſted; the wiſdom of God found out that way, it is a plot the angels ſtudy in.

Likewiſe here is juſtice, juſtice fully ſatisfied in Chriſt; he became our ſurety, who is God as well as man; if no creature can ſatisfy God, God can, when the ſecond perſon took our nature, and was our ſurety, and died for us; here was the glory of his juſtice.

And of his holineſs, that he would be no otherwiſe ſatisfied for ſin, it was ſo foul a thing, that to ſhew his hatred of it, he puniſhed it in his own ſon, when he became our ſurety. How holy and pure is God, that is, what a ſeparation is there in the nature of God from ſin, conſidering that he ſo puniſhed it in his ſon, our ſurety? that he made him cry out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" We cannot ſee the nature of God in any thing in the world, ſo much as in Chriſt; in Chriſt we ſee, as in a glaſs, his infinite ſweet wiſdom, his juſtice, and holineſs, in hating and loathing of ſin.

But the main of all is, his mercy and goodneſs, which ſet him to work, to contrive this great work of redemption, by the incar-

incarnation and death of Chriſt; the infinite rich, glorious, abundant mercy, that is the main thing wherein God is glorious now in Chriſt, therefore everywhere you have theſe and the like titles put to his goodneſs and mercy, "The bounty of God appeared, and the riches of his mercy, and the exceeding great height, and breadth, and depth of his love," there are no words large enough to ſet out the goodneſs and mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore I will only ſpeak of this attribute, becauſe this bears the maſtery among all the other attributes, though God be equally powerful and juſt, and yet he expreſſeth his mercy and grace moſt of all in Jeſus Chriſt, towards poor wretched man: For, after the fall, man being miſerable and ſinful, what attribute can exalt itſelf, but mercy to miſery, and grace to ſinful man, in pardoning his ſin? conſidering in what terms man ſtood, there was no other attribute could exalt itſelf but grace and mercy, to triumph over miſery and ſin. As it is in a city, thoſe that are otherwiſe equal in honour, yet ſometimes one bears rule above another, and he that is now magiſtrate and chief, take him at another time, he is inferior to others; ſo, ſince the fall, the mercy of God bears office, and is chief governor and commander over all the attributes of God. For, as I ſaid, what moved God to ſet his wiſdom to work, to contrive ſuch a thing as the ſalvation of mankind, to reconcile God and man in one perſon? his mercy moved him. What moved him to juſtify his juſtice? It was, that an excellent way might be made, without prejudice to any other of his attributes, for his free grace and mercy, that is what ſets all the other on work, that is the chief triumphing attribute; conſidering man now ſtanding in that exigence of mercy, therefore glory to God in the higheſt heavens, eſpecially for his free grace and mercy in Chriſt.

Now, that you may underſtand this ſweet point, which is very comfortable, and indeed the grand comfort to a Chriſtian, do but compare the glory of God, that is, the excellency, and eminency of God's mercy and goodneſs, and the greatneſs of this work of redemption by Chriſt, with other things. God is glorious in the work of creation, "the heavens declare the glory of God," and the earth manifeſts the glory of God, every creature indeed hath a beam of the glory of God, eſpecially thoſe celeſtial bodies in the heavens, they praiſe God in their kinds, but with our mouths they give us matter of praiſe, and if we have gracious hearts, we take notice of it, and magnify

him

him for his goodneſs; his goodneſs appears in the uſe of his creatures, and his greatneſs in the bulk of the creatures, his wiſdom in ordering and ranking of them, ſo that his mercy ſhines in all things in heaven and earth marvellouſly: oh, but beloved, heaven and earth ſhall come to nothing ere long; and what is all this glory of the goodneſs and greatneſs of God to us, if we be ſent to hell after this ſhort life is ended? what comfort is it that we go on the earth, and enjoy the comforts that God gives us in this world, and then to periſh for ever? therefore the glory and goodneſs of God, doth not ſo glorioufly appear in the creation of the world.

Nay, the glory of God's love and mercy, ſhined not to us ſo, when we were in Adam; not to Adam, for there God did good to a good man, he created him good, and ſhewed goodneſs to him, that was not ſo much wonder, but for God to ſhew mercy to an enemy, to a creature that was in oppoſition to him, that was in a ſtate of rebellion againſt him, it is a greater wonder, and more glory. It was a marvellous mercy for God to make man out of the earth; but here God was made man, he became man himſelf; there all was done with one word, "Let us make man," it was eaſily done. But, in this, for Chriſt to become man for us, and to ſuffer many things to be made a curſe for us, it was not ſo eaſy a matter; therefore, herein there is a great manifeſtation of the glory of God's goodneſs, and mercy to us: for God hath ſet himſelf to be glorious in his mercy and goodneſs, and grace in Chriſt, he hath ſet himſelf to triumph over the greateſt ill in man (which is ſin), in the glorious work of redemption. So that you ſee, here is the greateſt glory, and mercy of God, appearing in our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, the foundation of which is, his incarnation. In Exod. xxxiv. 6. God doth make an anſwer to Moſes, who deſired to ſee the glory of God, that he might have it manifeſted to him, not out of curioſity, but that he might love God the more; how doth God manifeſt his glory to him? Jehovah, ſtrong, merciful, glorious, pardoning ſin and iniquity; when God would ſet himſelf to ſhew his glory in anſwering Moſes' petition, he doth it in ſetting out his glorious mercy and grace, and loving kindneſs, in pardoning ſin and iniquity, to ſhew that he will now have his glory moſt appear, in the ſweet attribute of mercy, and compaſſion, in the forgiveneſs of ſins, &c. In Titus ii. xii. "The grace of God hath appeared, teaching us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts," &c.

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The grace of God hath appeared; grace hath not a body to appear visibly; but Christ appeared; and when he appeared, it was as if grace and love had been incarnate, and took a body, so that grace and mercy most of all shine in the incarnation of Christ.

I need not clear the point further, but only make a little use of it, and so end. Doth the grace, and love, and mercy of God, those sweet attributes, now appear and shew themselves in Jesus Christ? I beseech you let us remember it, (there is no point of divinity of more use and comfort), especially in the greatest plunges, and extremities, for it answereth all objections, the greatest and strongest that can be made.

The sinner will object, my sins are great, of long continuance and standing, they are of a deep dye.

Look then upon God in Christ, and consider his end in the incarnation of Christ; it was, that his mercy, and goodness, and grace, should be exalted, and triumph over all man's unworthiness; the greater thy sins are, the greater will be the glory of his mercy, and that is what God seeks for now, to be glorious in his mercy.

Again, thy heart tells thee, that if there be any mercy shewed to such a wretch as thou art, it must be no ordinary mercy.

It is true, God's mercy is no ordinary thing, of all attributes he will triumph in that: the glory of his mercy and goodness is, what he seeks to have of men, by the incarnation and redemption wrought by Christ, above all things whatsoever.

Object.—Thou wouldst have infinite mercy.

Answ.—Thou hast it in Christ.

Object.—Thy sins have abounded, God's grace abounds much more.

Thy sins are mountains, God's mercy is as the ocean, to cover those mountains.

Object.—But is it possible for God to forgive such a wretched sinner, who hath been a blasphemer, &c.?

Answer.—It were not with men: but, saith God, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts," you are vindictive in your dispo-

diſpoſitions, and will not pardon; but my thoughts are as far above yours as the heavens are above the earth; therefore, bound not the infinite mercy of God, wherein he will triumph, with thy narrow thoughts, but let it have its ſcope, eſpecially in plunges and aſſaults, and at ſuch times as the beſt of us may be brought unto. In Hoſea xi. "I am God and not man;" implying, that if he were man, we might have mean thoughts of him, confined thoughts; but. "I am God and not man," therefore comfort yourſelves in this, conſider how God ſets himſelf to be glorious in his love and mercy, to poor miſerable wretched man in Jeſus Chriſt.

You ſee the mercy of God in Chriſt, even in the ſacrament. He doth not only give Chriſt to us, "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," to be born and to die for us, but his mercy is a boundleſs mercy; we ſee he labours to ſtrengthen our faith by theſe pledges, that we make uſe of this. What if God be merciful in Chriſt? and what if Chriſt be gracious, and there is nothing but grace and mercy, if there be not an application, if there be not an intereſt, what benefit have we by it? we muſt intereſt ourſelves in this glorious perſon, intereſt ourſelves in Chriſt, for it is founded upon Chriſt; all the glorious mercy of God is grounded upon ſatisfaction of juſtice, that is, in Chriſt; but this is nothing, except we intereſt ourſelves in Chriſt, and in the mercy of God, for our appropriation is the ground of all comfort. God out of Chriſt is a fountain ſealed, he is a fountain of mercy, but he is ſealed up; he is a conſuming fire, but in Chriſt he is a cheering comforting fire; but this is nothing to us, unleſs we be in Chriſt, we muſt have intereſt in Chriſt, we muſt be bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh, he hath married our nature that we might be married to him, elſe we have no benefit by his incarnation. Now all our comfort is by this union and communion with Chriſt, by marrying ourſelves to Chriſt, by ſtrengthening our faith in this union and communion, that ſo we may make uſe of the boundleſs mercy of God in Chriſt; therefore how ſhould we be encouraged to come to the ſacrament to enjoy this comfort!

You have heard, beloved, of the joy of the angels, of their manner of celebrating the birth of Chriſt; and if the angels ſhould leave heaven, and come down upon earth, and take upon them bodies, how would they celebrate the incarnation of

Chriſt? You ſee here, "glory to God on high," this would be the courſe wherein they would carry themſelves to glorify God, anſwerable to their ſong; ſo ſhould we do, if we be like the bleſſed angels; we ſee how to celebrate the nativity of Chriſt, we need not go to fetch joy from hell, to celebrate it; if the devil ſhould be incarnate, and come to live among men, how would he celebrate the incarnation of Chriſt, otherwiſe than in many places it is? if we do not love to have our portion with devils, ſurely we ſhould not imitate thoſe, whoſe ſtate and condition we are afraid of. The angels ſaw matter enough in the thing itſelf, to make them ſing, "Glory to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men." What, hath God been ſo rich in love to us, in Chriſt, ſo wondrous in mercy, as to take our miſerable nature, not at the beſt, but at the at the worſt, and to take our condition upon him? here is matter of joy; and ſhall we be beholden to the devil for joy, when we ſhould rejoice for Chriſt? will not the thing itſelf yield matter of rejoicing? oh, baſe diſpoſitions, that we ſhould not content ourſelves with uniform joy, anſwerable to the thing itſelf. I deſire repentance, and reformation, of what hath been amiſs: if there be any that have been guilty of this kind, who intend to draw near to God in theſe holy myſteries, let them know, that God will be honoured of all that come near him, let them take it to heart. As Tertullian ſaid, in his time, What! ſhall we celebrate that, which is a public matter of joy to all the church, for a public ſhame, in a diſgraceful way?

I beſeech you conſider of theſe things; repent, for the kingdom of God is near, ſaith the Baptiſt. What! ſhall we therefore give carnal liberty to all looſeneſs, as if Chriſt came to bring Chriſtian liberty to licentiouſneſs? ſhall we, inſtead of repenting, run further and further into guilt, and indiſpoſe ourſelves to all goodneſs? is that the reaſoning of the ſcriptures? No, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand, change your lives, for Chriſt, and the fruits of the goſpel are at hand. The grace of God hath appeared in Chriſt, what? to teach us to live as we pleaſe, and to be more diſordered than at other times? O no, to live ſoberly and juſtly, not to wrong any body, and holy and godly in this preſent world; this is the ſcriptures reaſoning; and thus, if we ever look for comfort from God and Chriſt, we muſt reaſon too.

Let none think it too late to ſpeak of theſe things now; but thoſe

thoſe who have not had the grace of God to keep them innocent, let them make uſe of the grace of God to repent; and, as the phraſe of ſome of the ancients is, repentance is a board to eſcape to the ſhore, after we have made ſhipwreck, and done things amiſs; therefore, as I ſaid, thoſe that have not had the grace before to be innocent, let them make uſe of the grace of God, that now invites them to repentance, or not preſume to come to theſe holy things. I ſpeak it, not only to free mine own ſoul, but to free you from contracting further guilt: for, do you think to make amends by coming to the ſacrament, without repentance of what you have done before? What haſt thou to do, ſaith God, to take my name into thy mouth, to take my ſacrament into thy mouth, when thou hateſt to be reformed? God accounted his own ſervice, as the cutting off a dog's head, when they came indiſpoſed, and unprepared. The ſacrament is bane and poiſon to us, if we come without repentance: What ſaith the apoſtle—"For this cauſe," becauſe you come unreverently to the things of God, "ſome are ſick, and ſome weak, and ſome ſleep." G. ſtruck them with death for it. And it is a great cauſe why many are hardened in their ſins, and go on ſtill, becauſe God executes theſe ſpiritual judgments for prophaning theſe holy things, thinking to trifle with God, and to compliment with him in an eaſy performance.

I know thoſe that belong to God, are ſuffered ſometimes to do things amiſs, and to fall into errors and miſcarriages, that they may know themſelves better. And, indeed, much of our ſpiritual wiſdom is got by the ſight of our own errors, we grow more ſtabliſhed after the like temptations, for the time to come, and we can ſay by experience, it is good that I know the fooliſhneſs of my own heart, &c. but he that God hath no delight in, he ſwells and rages againſt any admonition, though it be in love to his ſoul. I hope there are none ſuch here; therefore, thoſe who have made their peace with God, let them come to theſe holy myſteries with comfort, notwithſtanding any thing before: for God hath prepared theſe things, not for angels, but for weak men, whoſe faith ſtands in need to be ſtrengthened.

And let us not think that Chriſtianity is a matter of compliment, that becauſe we are baptiſed, and come to hear the word, and receive the ſacrament, all is well; for we may do all this, and yet be greater ſinners than Turks, or Jews, or pagans: for

the moſt horrible ſins are committed in the church. Where is the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt committed, ſins againſt light, and againſt conſcience, but where the conſcience and underſtanding is moſt enlightened? there are the horrible provoking ſins; where there is more light and direction to live in another way. When the grace of God, and the riches of Chriſt are opened, and yet men live in their ſins againſt conſcience and the light of the goſpel, ſo far is the outward performance from excuſing in ſickneſs, and at the hour of death, that it aggravates our guilt and damnation, when we make not a right uſe of the holy things of God.

That which I ſhall next ſtand upon, ſhall be to ſhew,

1. How we may know, whether we glorify God for Chriſt, or no.

2. And, the hindrances that keep us from glorifying God for this excellent good.

3. The means how we may come to glorify God.

For the firſt, of glorifying God in general, I will not ſpeak much, it would be large: and the point of glorifying God, is moſt ſweetly conſidered, as inveſted in ſuch a benefit as this, when we think of it, not as an idea only, but think of it in Chriſt, for whom we have cauſe to glorify God, and for all the good we have by him.

I. We join with the bleſſed angels, in giving glory to God, when we exalt God in our ſouls, above all creatures and things in the world, when we lift him up in his own place, and let him be in our ſouls, as he is in himſelf, in the moſt holy; God is glorious, eſpecially in his mercy and goodneſs; let him be ſo in our hearts in theſe ſweet attributes, above all our unworthineſs and ſin: for God hath not glory from us, till we give him the higheſt place in our love, and joy and delight; and all thoſe affections which are ſet upon good, when they are ſet upon him as the chief good, then we give him his due place in our ſouls, we aſcribe to him that divinity, and excellency, and eminency, that is due to him.

And this eſpecially appears in competition and oppoſition of other things; when we will not offend God for any creature; when we can ſay, as the pſalmiſt, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and what is there in earth, in compariſon of thee? Therefore,

Therefore, let us aſk our own thoughts often, what that is, which our affections of delight, and joy and love, and all the ſweetneſs and marrow of our ſouls is ſpent on, and runs after? Is it the ſweet love of God in Chriſt? it is an excellent ſign. Surely, the bleſſed ſaints in heaven, and thoſe that are in earth, who look for heaven, are thus diſpoſed for the moſt part, eſpecially when they ſet themſelves in their devotions before God. Let us examine what is higheſt in our ſouls: "The loving-kindneſs of the Lord is better than life itſelf," ſaith the Pſalmiſt. Then we give God glory, when we ſet light by life itſelf, as holy St. Paul could ſay, What do you tell me of ſuffering at Jeruſalem? I am not only ready to do that, but to die for the name of Chriſt: and in Philip. i. "So God may be magnified by my life or death." I am at a point, ſo, if the queſtion be, whether we ſhall ſacrifice this blood, and life of ours, or diſhonour God, and wrong the goſpel, or be any way prejudicial to the known truth, when we are ready to part with all, with father and mother, and houſes and lands, and all for Chriſt; then with the angels we ſay, Glory be to God on high; therefore, in a ſtate of oppoſition when we cannot enjoy both, let us leave the creature, and cleave to God.

II. Again, we give glory to God for Chriſt, when we take all the favours we have from God in Chriſt; when we ſee Chriſt in every thing: all things are ours, becauſe we are Chriſt's. It is by Chriſt that we are heirs, that we have any comfortable intereſt, therefore, when we accept all in Chriſt, and give God in Chriſt the glory of all, we practice this that the angels do here, we give glory to God.

III. Again, we give glory to God, when we ſtir up others; all the angels conſent, there was no diſcord in this harmony of the angels. When we all join together, and ſtir up one another, and labour to promote the knowledge of God in Chriſt, all the ways we can, every one in our place and calling, magiſtrates, and miniſters, and every one in our families, labour that Chriſt may rule there, that God in Chriſt may be known. In Pſal. ciii. there the Pſalmiſt ſtirs up himſelf to glorify God, and he ſtirs up the angels, and here the angels ſtir up men, "Glory to God on high," &c. Where there is a zeal of God's glory, and a diſpoſition fit to glorify God, there will be a ſtirring up of one another, angels men, and men angels; and a wiſhing, that God may have glory in heaven and earth.

Therefore thoſe that labour not in their places, that the truth may be made known, that for baſe and worldly ends, are oppoſers of the publiſhing of the goſpel any way, (as it is the faſhion now, they will not appear openly, but cunningly undermine the goſpel) under pretences: they bear no tune with theſe bleſſed angels, for thoſe who have diſpoſitions like them, will ſtudy how this truth may be promoted and propagated, and ſpread even over the world; therefore, we ſhould labour every one to ſpread the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, eſpecially thoſe who are miniſters, whoſe office it is to unfold and open the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.

IV. Again, we glorify God in Chriſt, when we ſee ſuch glory and mercy of Chriſt, as it doth tranſform us, and change us, and from an inward change, we have always a bleſſed diſpoſition to glorify God, as I ſhewed out of 1 Cor. iii. This is the difference between the glaſs of the law and the glaſs of the goſpel, and of the creatures. In the law, we ſee the beams of the juſtice of God, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all," &c. and the beams of his power and goodneſs in the creature, but it doth not change and transform us to be good and gracious, but when we ſee the glory of God, of his goodneſs and infinite mercy, ſhining in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, (for we dare not look upon God immediately), it changeth the ſoul, to be gracious like unto Chriſt; therefore, if we find, that the knowledge of God in Chriſt hath changed our diſpoſitions, it is a ſign that we give glory to God indeed: for, to glorify God, is an action that cannot proceed but from a diſpoſition of nature that is altered and changed; the inſtrument muſt be ſet in tune, before it can yield this excellent muſic. To glorify God as the angels do, that is, all the powers of the ſoul muſt be ſet in order with grace, by the ſpirit of God; if the meditations and thoughts of the goſpel have altered our diſpoſitions to love God, and that which pleaſeth God, to do good to men, to delight in goodneſs, it is a ſign we are inſtruments in tune to glorify God, and that we have an apprehenſion of the love and mercy of God in Chriſt, as we ſhould, for it hath a tranſforming power to work this. "The grace of God will teach us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly lufts, and to live holily." When the grace of God, that is, the free love of God in Chriſt, in the forgiving of our ſins, and advancing us to heaven, hath this effect in our ſouls, it is a ſign we have a true notion and apprehenſion of the excellency and eminency of God's grace; otherwiſe,

wise, if we turn the grace of God into wantonness, to make the benefits by Christ a pretence and covering for our wicked and loose lives, we know not what it is to glorify God; but, though in words we say, glory be to God, yet in our lives we deny it, as the apostle saith. The hypocrites, in Isa. lxvi. 5. they had good speeches in their mouths; saith God, "hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, your brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, said, let the Lord be glorified," so you shall find those that are opposers, and persecutors, and haters of sincerity, will sing, *Gloria patri*, God be glorified. But what good will this do them, if they have diabolical, satanical dispositions; if they be like the devil, in opposing the truth, and hating that which is good? The devils in the gospel could glorify God for their own ends, "We know that thou art the son of God;" so devils incarnate can come to church, and receive the sacraments, and seem to praise God; O but there must be a change; for to glorify God, is a work of the whole man, especially of the spirit, "All that is within me, praise his holy name:" It came from the heart root of a sanctified judgment, out of good ground why we do it. The wish of the angels here, glory to God on high, it came from a good ground, because they knew, God is to be glorified in Christ: for judicious phrases are founded upon truths, so there must be a sanctified judgment to be the ground of it; and the affections must be in tune, answerable to those truths, then we are fit to glorify God; and all this is by the power of the gospel transforming us.

V. Again, we glorify God, when we take to heart any thing which may hinder, or stop, or eclipse God's truth, and obscure it, when it works zeal in us in our places, as far as we can, when it afflicts us deeply when we see the cause of religion hindered any way; if there be any desire of glorifying God, there will be zeal, the heart will move with a kind of indignation, when God is dishonoured, and his truth eclipsed with false doctrine, or by ill practice: It cannot be otherwise, it is out of the nature of the thing itself; therefore, those that are either instruments of stopping or obscuring the truth, or causing it to be reproached, by their wicked lives, or if they be not instruments, yet they do not take it to heart, when they see God dishonoured, surely they can speak little comfort to themselves, they have neither angelical, nor evangelical dispositions; for, if

they had the knowledge of the gospel, it would work this in them.

VI. Again, if we apprehend this glorious mystery of Christ in the gospel aright, it will work in us a glorious joy: for joy is a disposition, that especially fits us to glorify God, then we are fit to glorify God, when our hearts are enlarged with joy, when we think of God in Christ, when we think of the day of judgement, when we think of heaven, when we can think of hell with joy, as being subdued, and bless God for Christ, when we can think of all that is opposite as conquered in Christ, so that our joy is in the apprehension of our own blessed condition—it is a good sign we are in a disposition to glorify God: But I will not enlarge further on this point.

This being so excellent a duty, to which we are stirred up by the angels, "Glory to God on high," &c. what are the main hindrances of it, that we give not God more glory?

I. The main hindrances are, a double veil of ignorance, and unbelief, that we do not see the glorious light of God, shining in Jesus Christ; or else if we do know it, we do not believe it; and, thereupon, instead of that blessed disposition which should be in the soul, there comes an admiration of carnal excellencies, a delighting in base things.

This ignorance is partly from the darkness of our own hearts, being overcast sometimes, that such great things are too good to be true; our hearts have a hell of unbelief in them.

And sometimes the policy of Satan, who casts dust in our eyes, and labours that we may not see the glory of God in the gospel—2 Cor. iv. "The God of this world hath blinded their eyes," &c. Ignorance arising from within or without, is a great cause why we do not see the excellencies of God; therefore, no wonder, if where the gospel is not preached, that the devil hath a kind of reign, and God is not honoured at all, because the devil is the prince of darkness, and rules in darkness: that is one cause, ignorance.

So, likewise, unbelief, when we hear and see, and know the notion of mercy and of Christ, and can dispute of these things, like men who talk of what they never tasted of: the devils know all these things better than any man, yet they do not glorify God, because they do not believe that these things pertain

tain to them. Men want a light ſuitable to the truth of the things themſelves, a man may ſee them with a natural light, or with the light of education, or by books, or the like, but not in a ſpiritual and proper light, he ſees not ſpiritual heavenly things, in a ſpiritual light, and that is the reaſon he believes them not: theſe two veils are the cauſe why we ſee not the light of God ſhining in the goſpel, and why we do not glorify him. Light is a glorious creature, it was the firſt creature, it is not only glorious in itſelf, but it ſhews the glory of all other things too: if we had all the ſights in the world preſented to us, if there were no light to diſcover them, or no ſight in our eyes, if either be wanting, all the glory of them would be loſt. So it is in the goſpel, though there be wondrous admirable things there, if we want either light or ſight, if the light ſhine round about us, and the god of this world have blinded our eyes, and infidelity have blinded us, how can we glorify God, wanting a heavenly, proper, peculiar, ſpiritual light, ſuitable to the things? for a natural man, by the light which he hath, cannot judge of them: theſe are the main hindrances, the veil of ignorance and unbelief.

III. And on the contrary, there is another hindrance, that is, too much light, either want of light altogether, or too much light, when, by the preaching of the word of God, awaking our conſcience, and ſhewing our ſins ſo enormous, ſo tranſcendent, ſo odious, that we forget mercy in Chriſt, and ſo diſhonour Chriſt, to ſet the ſins of the creature above the infinite mercy of the Creator, as thoſe that doubt, and from doubting proceed to deſpair of the mercy of God, ſeeing the vileneſs of their ſins, in the true colours of them, and ſeeing and feeling God's anger and wrath together with their ſins, in the conſcience; here is too much light one way, and not looking to the other light; this excellent glorious infinite light of God's mercy ſhineth in the goſpel; they look not on God in the face of Chriſt, out of ſome ſtubborneſs and pride, they flatter themſelves they will not believe; they will not receive the conſolations due to them, but dwell upon the conſideration of their unworthineſs and ſins, and Satan holds them in that ſlavery and bondage. This is a great hindrance of glorifying of God, when we lift up our ſins above the mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, this is to take away God and Chriſt altogether: for, if the mercy, and rich and bountiful goodneſs of God, wherein

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he will be infinitely glorious, were not greater than our sins, it were not the mercy and bounty of a God, God should not be glorious in it, but there are but few of these that miscarry. God usually shines upon them at the last. There are three ranks of men, some are in the first, prophane, dead, loose christians, that were never under the law, that never understood the corruption of nature, nor themselves; some are brought from that, to understand themselves a little too much, that are under the law, and feel the flashes of God's wrath; and some, in the third place, are brought from hence, to be under grace, that is the only happy condition, to be under the grace of God in Christ: some men never come to the second step; they never understand what sin is, and what the anger and wrath of God is, they will give their conscience no leisure to tell them what their condition is; there is hope of the second, that they will come to the third rank; but for a company of prophane persons, opposers of goodness, to talk of the mercy of God in Christ, they are not in the next step to it; a man must be sensible of his sins, and of his misery, before he can have grace, therefore for those that have too much light, though it be a great fault in some, and hinders God of much glory, and themselves of much comfort, out of this peevish stubbornness of theirs, yet there are not many of them; and, as I said, few of them miscarry.

Now, from these two veils that hinder the glory of God, there come other hindrances, for the soul of man must wonder and admire at somewhat, it must have somewhat in the eye of it; hereupon, not seeing, or not believing the mercy, and goodness, and love of God, and the excellent prerogatives of a christian, issuing from the goodness of God, and the fruits of it, they dote upon some worldly excellency, either they are proud of their parts, and so God is robbed of his honour, or on creatures meaner than themselves; for the base nature of man, since the fall, it dotes upon earth, upon gold and silver, mean and base things, not to be compared to the excellency of man, or else upon some duties they perform, upon their own works, as if God should beholden to them, for not knowing themselves well, and the infinite glory of God in Christ, that God must have all the glory, not only of happiness, but of grace that brings us to happiness, they glory in what they have done, as in popery, they think they merit much by their performance. In the night time a torch seems a goodly thing, and sometimes, rotten wood

wood will shine, but in the day time, when the sun appears, the very stars shine not, we care not for meaner lights; for what good do they then? so the soul, when it wants a sight of the greatest excellency, it dotes upon rotten wood, upon every torch light, many vain things seem to be great; a man may see by the dispositions of many, what they admire and stand upon most, their carriages shew it well enough, it argues a corrupt, and weak judgment: you see what are the main hindrances.

Now, the way to attain to this glorious duty, to glorify God; the next thing shall be to give some directions, because it is a most necessary duty. Is it not what we pray for in the Lord's prayer? "hallowed be thy name;" and what is the end that we were created and redeemed for, but that God may have some glory by us? therefore, being a necessary absolute duty, let us hearken to some directions that may help us that way.

First, therefore, if we would glorify God, we must redeem some time to think of these things, and bestow the strength of our thoughts this way; the soul being the most excellent thing in the world, it is fit it should be set on the most excellent duty, man being in such an excellent condition, being heir of heaven, and having an understanding soul, it is fit the most excellent creature should be set upon the most excellent object. Now, the most excellent part of the soul is the understanding, it kindles all the affections, and leads all the rest, therefore let us take some time to meditate, and think of these things;—what we are by nature, and the misery we are exposed to by sin, that whatsoever we have more than hell, is more than we deserve: and then, withal, think what we are advanced to in Christ, what we are freed from, that cursed condition, and what we shall be freed from, the sting of death, and all that we fear for the time to come; think of what we are freed from, and what we are advanced to, and by whom, by God becoming man; a mystery that might, nay, that doth ravish the very angels themselves; God-man now in heaven, making good what he did on earth, by his intercession, and then the ground of all, the infinite love, and mercy, and bounty of God, to poor distressed man. The thought of these things will inflame the heart: now, they never work upon the heart throughly, till they end in admiration; and, indeed, the scripture sets it down in terms of admiration. "So God loved the world," so, how? So as I cannot tell how, I cannot express it; and, "what love hath God shewed to us, that we should

ſhould be called the ſons of God?" And then, the fruits that we have by this incarnation of Chriſt, and by his death, they are admirable: "Peace that paſſeth underſtanding, joy unſpeakable, and glorious;" ſo that the myſtery is wonderful, and the dignity wonderful, and the fruits, the comfort, and peace, and joy wonderful, every thing is an object of admiration; therefore, when we think and meditate of theſe things, let us never end, till our ſouls be wound up to admiration of the excellent love of God. We wonder at things that are new, and rare, and great: is there any thing more new, and rare, than that, never was the like, for God to become man? Is there any thing more excellent, than the benefits we have by Chriſt, becoming man, to free us from ſo great miſery, and to advance us to ſo great happineſs? If any thing be an object of admiration, ſurely it muſt be this. Therefore the apoſtle doth well to give all the dimenſions to the love of God in Chriſt, height, and breadth, and depth, and length—it is a love paſſing knowledge, Epheſ. iii.

Queſt.—What good will come by this?

Anſ.—When the ſoul is thus exerciſed, it will be fit to glorify God; when it is in this frame, it will think itſelf too good for any baſe ſervice of ſin. Eagles will not catch at flies; when the ſoul is lift up to conſider God's love and mercy in Chriſt, will it be catching at every baſe thing in this world? No, it will not, the ſoul never ſins, but when it loſeth this frame, to have a judgment ſuitable to things, when our judgment and affections of the beſt things are loſt, then comes in a judgment, and affection to other things as better; ſo loſing that frame the ſoul ſhould be in, we fall to the creature, to commit ſpiritual fornication with that.

Let us labour to keep our ſouls in this temper; begin every day with this meditation, to think what we were, what we are now, and what we ſhall be, and by what glorious means all this was wrought, that the ſoul may be warmed with the love of God in Chriſt; this frame of ſpirit will not ſuffer the ſoul to ſin, to ſtoop to baſe ſinful luſts.

Now, to help this, (in the next place), beg of God the ſpirit of revelation to diſcover to us theſe things in their own proper light, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned. Now, the ſpirit knows the mind of God, what the love of God is to every one

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in particular, and he knows our hearts too. Therefore, the apoſtle deſires of God, the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, to diſcover theſe things to us, not only that they are truths, but that alſo they are truths to us: for, unleſs we know theſe things belong to us in particular, we cannot glorify God as we ſhould; they are in themſelves glorious things, to hear of God's mercy in Chriſt, of God becoming man, to hear of kingdoms and crowns; O, but when there is a ſpirit of appropriation to make theſe our own, that God in Chriſt loves us, "Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me," Gal. ii. then the ſoul cannot but break forth, with the angels here, "Glory to God on high," therefore beg the ſpirit to reveal to us our part and portion, that he would ſhew his face to us, that he is to us a father in Chriſt. Surely in hearing, meditation, and prayer, &c. we ſhall find a ſecret whiſpering, and report from heaven, that God is our Saviour, and that our ſins are forgiven, eſpecially when we ſtand in moſt need of this comfort. Let us therefore beg of God to take away the veils of ignorance and unbelief, and openly to reveal his fatherly bowels, and tender mercy to us in Chriſt; to diſcover to us in particular more and more our intereſt in the ſame by his ſpirit, that only knows the ſecret of our hearts; and being above our hearts, can ſettle our doubts; only the ſpirit can do it: for as God only works ſalvation, ſo the ſpirit only can ſeal to our ſouls our ſalvation. This is one excellent way to help us to glorify God.

And add this as a motive, as a plea, not to move God ſo much, as to move, and to ſatisfy our hearts, and to ſtrengthen our faith, that is the end of our lives, and the pitch of our deſires, to glorify God: therefore we deſire God to reveal himſelf ſo far to us, to be our father in Chriſt, that we may glorify him; ſurely it is a forcible plea, God will do what is ſuitable to his end, he hath made all things for his own glory, eſpecially the work of redemption in Chriſt, is for the glory of his rich mercy, and we deſire the ſenſe of his mercy and love, for this end that we may be fitter to glorify God; it is a prevailing argument, fetched from God's own end.

And let us labour daily more and more, to ſee the vanity of all things in the world: put the caſe—we have honours, and large poſſeſſions in the world, that we wanted nothing; if this were ſeparated from God's love in Chriſt, for life everlaſting, what comfort could we have in this, eſpecially at the hour of

of death? let us see, therefore, the vanity and emptiness of all things else out of Christ, and the good we have by Christ, what all will be ere long; the daily thoughts of that will be a good means: for, we must empty ourselves of what we are, that we may be filled with what we are not; and we must daily consider the emptiness of the creature, wherewith we labour to support ourselves. For, when men have no goodness in themselves, they will have an excellency in the creature, therefore when we see ourselves out of Christ, to be nothing but fuel for God's vengeance, and see that the creature can afford us nothing but vexation; these thoughts, that these things are so, from experience, will make us draw near to God upon all occasions, it will make us glorify him, and abase ourselves. What made Job abase himself and glorify God? when he drew near to God, and God drew near to him, "I abhor myself," and so we see in Abraham. Let us draw near to God upon all occasions, in the word, and prayer, and in the sacrament, and this will make us see our own nothingness, and God's greatness: for that is the way to honour him, to see his greatness, and a nothingness in the creature, that all things in him are so excellent; and out of him nothing and worse than nothing.

Now, we are to draw near to God in the sacrament, and the nearer to God, the more we honour him: who honours God most? surely Christ, because he is so near him, being God and man in one person, and next to him, the blessed angels glorify God, they are near him; therefore, in Isa. vi. they cover their faces; it being impossible for the creature to comprehend the great majesty of God, and they cover their feet in modesty: the nearer we draw to God, in the meditation and consideration of his excellency in the ordinances, the more humble, and abased we shall be in ourselves, and the more we shall honour God, seeing his excellency, especially of his love. So, next to the angels, the saints; "All thy works praise thee," Psal. cxlv. they give matter and occasion; "thy saints bless thee:" and the nearer we come to God, the fitter we are for this. Now there is a wondrous near coming to God in the sacrament, if we come prepared, we come to have communion and strengthening in Christ; he is both the inviter, and the feast itself: we come to be made one with him, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; therefore, if we come prepared, this is the way to bring us to a disposition to glorify God. You see here the wondrous infinite love of God, in the sacrament, to stoop so low to his creatures,

tures, to ſtrengthen our faith, by giving us theſe things. God had been good to us, whether he had given us his oath, and his ſeal, or no; but he knows we are weak, and unbelieving, and doubting, therefore to help us, he hath given us not only his promiſe, but his oath, he has given us ſigns and ſeals; here is wondrous mercy. Let us be encouraged to come in, and admire the love of God, not only in giving his Son Chriſt for us, but in affording us other means to ſtrengthen our faith. Let none be diſcouraged in the ſight and ſenſe of their own ſins, but let them come in, and they ſhall glorify God the more: where ſin hath abounded in their ſenſe and feeling, there grace ſhall more abound. And thoſe that have been good, and have ſlipped any way, let them conſider God's infinite love in Chriſt, it is not a ciſtern, but a ſpring. God's mercy in Chriſt, and the blood of Chriſt, is a fountain opened for Judah, &c. that is, it ſerves not for our firſt converſion only; but every day, upon every occaſion, when we have made a breach with God, we may come and waſh in that bath, Chriſt's blood. The blood of Chriſt purgeth; it is in the preſent tenſe, it runs continually in the vigour of it. There is a ſpring of corruption in us, there is a ſpring of mercy in God, there is a ſpring of Chriſt's blood, that hath a perfect efficacy to waſh our ſouls. Therefore, if we have not yet been converted, and humbled, and caſt down for our ſins, let us now come in, and give God the glory of his mercy; and, if we have fallen again, conſider there is a fountain opened for Judah, and Jeruſalem to waſh in, and let us come and renew our repentance and faith at this time.

Peace on Earth.

The ſame holy affection in the angels, that moved them to wiſh God to have his due of glory from the creature, it moves them to wiſh peace to men likewiſe; to ſhew this (by the way) that,

There can be no true zeal of God's glory, but with love to mankind.

They were not ſo raviſhed with the glory of God, as to forget poor man on earth; O no, they have ſweet pure affections to man, a poorer creature than themſelves. Therefore, let them who are injurious and violent in their diſpoſitions, and inſolent

inſolent in their carriage, never think of glorifying God, when they deſpiſe and wrong men. There are ſome who overthrow all peace in the earth for their own glory; but he that ſeeks God's glory, will procure peace, what he can; for they go both together; as we ſee here, "Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth."

Now their end of wiſhing peace on earth, is, that man might thereby glorify God; that God being reconciled, and peace being eſtabliſhed in mens conſciences, they might glorify God; hence obſerve this likewiſe, that

We cannot glorify God, till we have ſome knowledge of our peace with him in Chriſt.

We muſt have the firſt act, to caſt ourſelves upon God's mercy in Chriſt, and adhere and cleave to that mercy; then we ſhall feel ſo much comfort, as ſhall make us glorify God, though we may queſtion it in deſertion ſometimes: here the angels intending, that God ſhould have glory of all, they wiſh peace on earth, in the conſciences of men eſpecially.

The reaſon is, peace comes from righteouſneſs: Chriſt is firſt the King of Righteouſneſs, and then King of Peace, righteouſneſs cauſeth peace; now, unleſs the ſoul be aſſured of righteouſneſs in Chriſt, it can have no peace. What ſaid the Virgin Mary? "My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour," ſhe begins with magnifying the Lord, but what was the ground? ſhe rejoiced in God as a Saviour, therefore ſhe magnified him; ſo, in the Lord's prayer, we ſay, "Our Father," which is a word of the covenant of grace, when the ſoul conceives of God, as a gracious father reconciled in Chriſt; and then comes, "hallowed be thy name;" inſinuating that, till we know in ſome meaſure God to be our Father, we cannot with a gracious ſpirit ſay, "hallowed be thy name" for can we heartily wiſh for the manifeſtation of the glory of him that we think is our enemy, and him that we have no intereſt in his greatneſs and goodneſs? the heart of man will never do it, therefore God muſt firſt ſpeak peace to the ſoul, (the angels knew that well enough) and then we are fit to glorify God.

Peace on Earth.

What is peace? It is the beſt thing that man can attain unto, to

to have peace with his maker and creator. Peace in general, is a harmony and an agreement of different things. This peace, here you may know what it is by the contrary, as the apoſtle ſaith, Epheſ. i. 10. there is a gathering all to a head in Chriſt: out of Chriſt, there is a diviſion, a ſeparation and a ſcattering; a breach that is five-fold.

Firſt, there a ſcattering and a diviſion from God, the fountain of good, with whom we had communion in our firſt creation, and his delight was in his creatures; we loſt that bleſſed communion, and our ſins have ſeparated between God and us, as the prophet ſaith.

2. Then there is a ſeparation between the good angels and us; for they bring good ſubjects, take part with their Prince, and therefore join againſt rebels, as we are: hence it is, that upon the ſight of angels, the very hearts of good men have ſometimes been ſtricken, conſidering that there is no very good terms between us and the angels, till we come to Chriſt again.

3. Then there is a diviſion and a ſcattering between man and man: no common ſpirit of God will keep men together till they be in Chriſt; as it is ſaid, God ſent an evil ſpirit, a ſpirit of diviſion between the men of Sichem; ſo ſince the fall, there is an ill ſpirit of diviſion among men, till the goſpel again bring peace, eſpecially there is no ſound peace between men, in the ſtate of nature, and others that are God's children: nor with the ordinances of God, for men apprehend the ordinances of God as enemies; the word cuts and lanceth him: it is as the ſentence of a judge to condemn him, therefore he fears and trembles at the powerful opening of the word. The ordinances of God ſpeak no comfort to a carnal man; he is an Ahab, he never had a word of peace from the prophet: the word always ſpeaks ill to him, he is under the law, and it ſpeaks nothing but terror and curſes to him.

4. And then there is a diviſion and ſeparation between a man and the creature, which is ready to be in arms againſt any man that is in the ſtate of nature, to take up God's quarrel, as we ſee in the plagues of Egypt, and other examples; if God do but give them leave, they preſently make an end of ſinful man, and they would glory in it too, to ſerve their creator; it is part of their vanity to be ſubject to wicked men, they have no peace with the creature.

5. And they have no peace with themſelves; they ſpeak peace to themſelves, but alas! God ſpeaks none to them, they make a covenant with death and hell, but death and hell make no covenant with them, ſo it is a forced ſleepy peace, it is a dead ſleep, the peace they have, it is but a diverſion to other things; they conſider not themſelves, and the war they are in with God, with themſelves, and with the creature, it is but a truce that they take up for a time; when God opens their conſcience, there is a hell in their hearts and ſouls, that when it is looſed, makes them to ſuffer a hell upon earth, they enter into the pains of hell before their time, ſo there is no peace to the wicked at all: there is ſince the fall, a ſeparation between God and man, between angels and man, between man and the creatures, between man and himſelf.

Now, Chriſt at his coming, taking our nature upon him, brings all into one again, he brings God and man together again, by offering himſelf a ſacrifice, by making full ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God: and ſin, which is the cauſe of his diſpleaſure, being taken away, God being gracious and merciful, his mercy runs fully on us; ſin only ſeparates between God and us, and that Chriſt takes away, therefore he is called by St. Paul, "Chriſt our peace," Eph. ii. "and the prince of peace," Iſa. xi. 7. he was qualified to be our peace, he was a friend to both parties, having married our nature on purpoſe, that he might in our nature bring God and us together, as it is 1 Pet. iii. 18.—His whole work was to "bring us back again to God," from whom we fell at the firſt.

Then if we be at peace with God, all other peace will follow: for good ſubjects will be at peace with rebels, when they are brought into ſubjection to their king, and all join in one obedience; therefore the angels are brought to God again by Chriſt.

And ſo for men, there is a ſpirit of union between them, the ſame ſpirit that knits us to God by faith, knits us one to another by love.

And we have peace with the creature, for when God who is the Lord of Hoſts, is made peaceful to us, he makes all other things peaceable. The heathen could ſay, when God is at peace he makes all ſo.

So there is peace in our own hearts; we are aſſured by the ſpirit of God, that he is our Father, he ſeals it to our conſcience by

by his ſpirit, becauſe the blood of Chriſt is ſet on by the ſpirit of God, and not by our own, ſo that now God and we are brought to one, and angels and we, and all other things: therefore now the angels ſay, "peace on earth," when Chriſt was born.

Now, we will ſhew that this bleſſed peace, in all the branches of it, is founded in Chriſt: Chriſt is the cauſe and the foundation of it; for though theſe words were ſpoken at the incarnation of Chriſt, yet we refer them to the whole work of his Mediator-ſhip, in the ſtate of his abaſement, and his ſtate of exaltation, our peace is wholly founded upon him: for he was born and became man, and became ſin, that is, a ſacrifice for ſin for us, he became a curſe for us, to eſtabliſh a peace, and to ſatisfy God's anger; and then he roſe again, to ſhew that he had fully ſatisfied God's anger, and that peace was fully eſtabliſhed:—therefore the holy Ghoſt was ſent after the reſurrection, as a teſtimony that God was appeaſed, and now in heaven he is ever there as a Prieſt, to make interceſſion for us. So that Chriſt is our peace, from his incarnation to his death, from thence to his reſurrection and aſcenſion, and interceſſion, all peace with God, with angels, and with creatures, is eſtabliſhed in Chriſt.

Queſt.—And why in Chriſt?

Anſ.—Chriſt is every way fitted for it: for he is the mediator between God and man, therefore by office he is fit to make peace between God and man, he is Emanuel, himſelf God and man in one nature, therefore his office is to bring God and man together.

1. It is fit it ſhould be ſo in regard of God, who being a conſuming fire, will have no peace with the creature without a Mediator; it ſtands not with his majeſty, neither can there ever be peace with us otherwiſe. Now Chriſt is a fit Mediator, being a friend to God, as the Son of God, and a friend to us, taking our nature upon him, to be a merciful Redeemer.

2. It was alſo fit in reſpect of us, it ſhould be ſo: Alas! "who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?" who can have communion with God, who is a conſuming fire? No, we cannot endure the ſight of an angel, the Iſraelites could not endure the ſight of Moſes, when he came from the mount, his face ſhone ſo; and can we endure the glorious preſence of God,

" who dwelleth in light, that none can attain unto ?" Therefore God derives all good to us in our flesh, that though we cannot see God directly in himself, yet in the flesh we can see God incarnate: we may see the sun in the water, though we cannot directly look on that creature without hazard. It was a comfort to the Patriarchs, that they had Joseph their brother, the second man in the kingdom So it may be to every Christian, that now we have the second person in heaven our brother, in our nature; he is the steward of heaven and earth, to dispense all God's treasures to us. Will not he acknowledge us, that are " bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh ?" since he took our nature for this end, to be a merciful Redeemer. It is most suitable to our condition, that Christ should be the foundation of our peace.

3. If we look to Christ himself, he being God's Son, and the Son of his love : for him to make us sons, and sons of God's love, is it not most agreeable, that he that is the image of God, should again renew the image of God that we lost ? Jacob's ladder knit heaven and earth together; so Christ knits heaven and earth, God and us together. You know if a ladder lie upon the ground it doth no good, or if it be kept above, it serves for nothing, so if Christ were only God, or only man, there could be no union wrought between God and man ; but now being both, he is a fit Mediator between both. Christ is the foundation of our peace, (in the gracious covenant that God hath made with us) in all his offices. For as a Prophet, he proclaimed peace, he preached it before in the time of Noah, he published peace as the prophet of his church ; in himself when he lived, and by his ministers when he left the world. And as a priest, he did work our reconciliation, offering himself a sacrifice, he made peace between God and us. And as a king, he subdues the corruption of our souls, he puts down the pride of our thoughts, to bring the heart into subjection to him by his mighty power, (which indeed requires an almighty power,) also by his kingly office, he rules, and governs, and subdues all the enemies of his church, without and within. You see then, without further illustration, that Christ is the foundation of our peace, by his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension.

This should teach us, first, that whatsoever intercourse we have with God the Father, we should take Christ, take our Benjamin, our beloved, with us: we must not offer sacrifice without the high Priest : let us offer nothing to God without Christ : there is no intercourse between God and us, till we be reconciled

ciled in Chriſt, in whom we muſt offer all our ſacrifices and endeavours. Therefore let us not own an abſolute God in our devotions, let us think of God reconciled in Chriſt and at peace with us, and a Father in covenant in Chriſt, and then our perſons and prayers, and all ſhall be accepted for the ſacrifice of Chriſt, in whom he ſmells a ſweet ſavour, as it is ſaid concerning Noah, he offered a ſacrifice to God, a ſweet ſmelling ſacrifice of reſt, ſo doth God in Chriſt; he is the true mercy ſeat in Chriſt, in looking to whom, God frees us from the curſe of the law. Jeruſalem was the glory of the world, and the temple was the glory of Jeruſalem, but the mercy-ſeat was the glory of the temple, becauſe that pointed to Chriſt, the mercy-ſeat, in whom we have intercourſe with God the Father.

We conceive not high enough of the majeſty of God, when we go to him immediately; we muſt go to him in his Son, whom he hath ſent, and anointed, and "ſet forth, as the propitiation for our ſins, and him hath God the Father ſealed:" he cometh with authority: therefore God will be reconciled in Chriſt; we may bind God himſelf when we offer Chriſt, he is the foundation of reconciliation and peace, by God's appointment, he is the Prince of Peace, of his own anointing, therefore we may go boldly to God, to the throne of grace in Chriſt.

And let us often ſeriouſly meditate of the ſweet favour and reconciliation ſtabliſhed now between God and us through Chriſt, it is the ſweeteſt mediation.

Firſt, to think on what ill terms we are with God, by nature, and then think how near we are now to God in Chriſt, that we are at peace with him. Methinks the word is too ſhort, there is more meant than is ſpoken. At peace with God in Chriſt, nay, now we are friends, nay we are ſons and heirs, fellow heirs, fellow kings with Chriſt: for God's favours are complete as a God, he ſtabliſheth not a peace as men do, only to do them no harm, whom they are at peace with, but where he makes a peace he confers all that is good, reconciliation, adoption, giving us the liberty of ſons and friends, to go boldly to God as a Father in all our wants: let us think more of this, and improve this bleſſed privilege every day.

Peace upon earth.

Queſt.—Why doth he ſay, peace on earth?

Anſ:—Becauſe peace was here wrought upon earth by Chriſt, in the days of his fleſh, when he offered himſelf a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to his Father.

Becauſe here in earth, we muſt be partakers of it; we oft times defer to make our peace with God from time to time, and think there will be peace made in another world: O beloved, our peace muſt be made on earth. "We muſt live godly and righteouſly, and ſoberly in the preſent world," we muſt enter "into the kingdom of heaven here." Further entrance "muſt be miniſtered here, by growing in grace daily more and more." If heaven be not entered into here, it ſhall never be entered afterwards; for the church is the ſeminary of the heavenly Paradiſe, all that are taken to heaven to be ſet there for ever, they are ſet in the church before they are planted, and grow up there awhile under the means of ſalva ion. Therefore labour to have this "peace on earth," or elſe we can never glorify God on earth, and if we glorify him not on earth, we ſhall never do it in heaven.

But to come to ſome trials, whether we have this peace made or no, whether we can ſay in ſpirit and truth, there is peace eſtabliſhed between God and us. 1. For a ground of this, that may lead us to further trial, know that Chriſt hath reconciled God and us together, not only by obtaining peace, by way of ſatisfaction, but by way of application alſo; whom he died for to obtain peace, he gives a ſpirit of application to improve that peace, to improve "Chriſt the prince of peace," as their own; for there is a mutual commerce between God and man, who is an underſtanding creature; and there is nothing that God doth for man, if we look to the general and head of benefits, but there is ſomewhat in man wrought by the ſpirit to anſwer it again. God is reconciled to man in Chriſt, man muſt be reconciled to God in Chriſt, in 2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Chriſt reconciling the world," when he was on the croſs, God was there reconciled in Chriſt. Is that all? no, God by us intreats you to be reconciled to God. A ſtrange condeſcending, that God ſhould entreat us to be good to our own ſouls, by his miniſters, "we entreat you to be reconciled," that is, to accept of the reconciliation wrought by Chriſt, and to lay aſide all weapons of rebellion, whereby you fought againſt God, in the courſe of your vanity; we beſeech you to be reconciled, and to "repent, becauſe the kingdom of God is at hand;" ſo that except there be reconciliation wrought by a ſpirit of application on man's

man's part, it is not ſufficient that God is reconciled in Chriſt, becauſe God will always have a reflex act from man; as he chooſeth man, ſo man by grace chooſeth him, as he loves and delights in man, ſo he will have man by a ſpirit of ſweetneſs, delight in him again above all the world; "whom have I in heaven but thee?" ſo there is ſomewhat wrought by the ſpirit to God again. Why ſhould God be on good terms with us, but to enjoy the friendſhip of his poor creature? unleſs therefore there be a gracious diſpoſition wrought in the creature, to look back, to love and delight in God, as God doth in him; there is no actual reconciliation, there muſt be a forcible application by the ſpirit: if God ſhould not give a ſpirit of application, as well as Chriſt obtain heaven for us, thoſe that are in the covenant of grace ſhould not be ſtabliſhed, but God by this means brings them ſo near that he loving them, loves them for ever, and they have an everlaſting covenant, and an everlaſting union. The carnal heart of man is a poiſonful thing, and hates God naturally, it wiſhes that there were no God to judge him; he may think well of God for the good things of this life, but when he thinks of God as a judge, to caſt him into hell, he wiſheth with all his heart; Oh that there were no God, that I might have my fill of the pleaſures of ſin.' Now the ſoul, when it is at peace with God, when God by his ſpirit ſpeaks to the ſoul and ſaith, I am thy ſalvation, thy ſins are forgiven thee; and as Chriſt to the good thief on the croſs, "This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe;" when he whiſpers to the ſoul, thou art mine, and "I am thine;" then the ſoul becomes ſweet and peaceable to God again, and ſtudies to advance the glory of God's mercy by all means, and to advance the goſpel of peace; it becomes friendly to God.

To come to ſome more familiar evidences, whether we be at peace with God, and whether we have the comfort of this peace eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, or no.

2. Thoſe that are reconciled one to another have common friends, and common enemies; if therefore there be peace between God and us, it is ſo with us; we love all, where we ſee any evidence of God's love, we love chriſtians as chriſtians, and whom God loves not we love not, what God hates we hate in ourſelves and others, though we love their perſons.

3. Another evidence of peace made in Chriſt, between God and us, is a boldneſs of ſpirit, and acquaintance with God, "ac-

quaint thyſelf with God, and be at peace with him," Job xxii. A Chriſtian being at peace with God in Chriſt Jeſus, he goes boldly to the throne of grace, in all his neceſſities, as a poor child goes boldly to his father, and moves the bowels of his father by his petitions. When two kingdoms are at peace, there is trading ſet up afreſh again, ſo when God is at peace with the ſoul, there is a heavenly intercourſe and trading ſet up; there is no man that is at peace with God, but he calls upon God in his perſon, in his family, he ſets up the worſhip of God there, he labours to bring all to God that he can, he thinks it the moſt gainful trade in the world. In the want of grace and ſpiritual comfort, he goes to the fountain of grace, and improves that bleſſed prerogative, we have by peace in Chriſt, thoſe that have not the ſpirit of God to improve it in communion, and trading with God, it is a ſign there is no peace: ſtrangeneſs ſhews that there is no peace. Alas! how ſtrangely do many men walk towards God, that from Sunday to Sunday ſcarce lift up their hearts to heaven for a bleſſing, but walk in the ſtrength of their mother-wit, and ſupport themſelves with the ſucceſs of ſecond cauſes, and bleſs themſelves, they are ſtrangers from the God of peace: let us take notice of this, and account it a great prerogative, that we may go to God with boldneſs, that it is not now as it was in Paradiſe, there is no angel with a ſword to ſhut us from heaven, but now there is an entrance to the throne of grace, we may go boldly in the name of Chriſt to offer ourſelves, and all our endeavours.

4. A Chriſtian that hath made his peace with God, will never allow himſelf in any ſin againſt conſcience, becauſe he knows ſin is odious in itſelf, lothſome to God, and hurtful to his ſoul, therefore he will not be in league with any ſinful, unjuſt courſe. What, to be in league with God, and to be at peace with that which God hates more than the devil himſelf? he hates ſin more than the devil, for he hates him for ſin: therefore a man that allows himſelf in known ſin, there can be no peace between God and him, as he ſaith, why do you talk of peace, as long as the witchcrafts and whoredoms of Jezebel remain? a man that lives in ſins againſt conſcience, that is an open ſwearer, an unjuſt perſon, that cares not by what means he advanceth himſelf; what doth he talk of peace with God, when he is in league with God's enemy? therefore, though ſuch men (out of "the hardneſs of their hearts, which are harder then the nether milſtone," and God ſeals them up under a hard heart to dam-

damnation, except ſome terrible judgement awake them) force a peace upon themſelves, they ought to ſpeak none, and they ſhall find it to their coſt ere long, therefore let us examine our own hearts, how we ſtand affected to any ſinful courſe. There may be infirmities and weakneſſes hang upon the beſt, that are againſt their purpoſes, and reſolutions, but for a man reſolvedly to ſet himſelf in an ill way, how can he be at peace with God, and with Satan at the ſame time? let us take notice of theſe things, and not trifle with our own conſciences.

5. Again, where there is a true peace eſtabliſhed, there is a high eſteem of the word of peace, the goſpel of reconciliation, as St. Paul calls it, 2 Cor. v. "He hath committed to us the word of reconciliation," thoſe that find this peace, there is ſtirred up by the ſpirit in their breaſts, a high eſteem of the ordinances of God, as being the word of their peace; how come we to have peace between God and us? is it not by opening the riches of God's love in Chriſt in the ſcriptures? Therefore ſaith the ſcriptures, "bleſſed are the feet of them that bring glad tidings;" the meaneſt part of their body, their feet are bleſſed, therefore thoſe that have deſpicable thoughts of the miniſtry of the word, and place their happineſs in undervaluing the labour and pains of that office and calling, it is a ſign they have prophane hearts, for whoſoever hath had any grace wrought by the word of reconciliation, and of peace, they will highly eſteem it, and reſpect them for their office ſake, it cannot be otherwiſe.

6. Laſtly, thoſe that have found peace, are peaceable. It is univerſally true, God doth make an impreſſion of the ſame diſpoſition in us to others; we apprehending God in Chriſt to be peaceable to us, we are peaceable to others: therefore in Iſa. xi. The knowledge of God in Chriſt, it alters and changeth men's diſpoſitions, it makes wolves and lions to be of a milder diſpoſition and temper; harſh, proud, ſturdy diſpoſitions, they never felt peace and mercy themſelves, therefore they are not ready to ſhew it to others. In the nature of the thing itſelf, it is impoſſible for the ſoul to apprehend peace, in the love of God, and not to have the diſpoſition wrought upon, to ſhew what it hath felt: let us think of theſe and ſuch like evidences daily, to keep our hearts from ſpeaking falſe peace. The greateſt danger in the world (in this regard) is in the Church, for people under the goſpel ſpeak falſe peace to themſelves, there is a ſpirit of deluſion, that carries them along to their death, and ſo they are in hell before they be aware; and then too late they ſee, that they

they never were on good terms with God, in all their life, becauſe they looked on Chriſt making peace, without any conſideration of the ſpirit of application.

There muſt be a ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt on our ſouls, to make it our own. We are come to the blood of ſprinkling, it is not the blood of Chriſt that makes our peace only as blood, but as it is ſprinkled by the hand of faith; that is, as the hyſſop that ſprinkled the blood of the ſacrifice upon the people. We muſt not think to have any good by the blood of Chriſt, when we want the blood of ſprinkling, that is, this particular faith: Chriſt loved me, and hath choſen me, and I chooſe him, and love him again; and ſo go with boldneſs to God as a Father; unleſs there be this paſſage of the ſoul between God and us, let us not talk of peace: for, if we might have good by Chriſt, without a ſpirit of application, and if there were not a neceſſity of ſprinkling the blood of Chriſt upon our ſouls by faith, all the world ſhould be ſaved.

In the next place, to give a few directions to maintain this peace actually, and continually every day. 1. To walk with God, and to keep our daily peace with God, it requires a great deal of watchfulneſs over our thoughts, for he is a ſpirit over our words and actions: watchfulneſs is the preſerver of peace; where there is a great diſtance between two that are at peace, it is not kept without acknowledgment of that diſtance, and without watchfulneſs: it is not here, as it is in a peace between two kings, who are equal with each other, but it is a peace between the king of heaven and rebels, who are taken to be ſubjects; therefore we muſt walk in humble low terms, "humble thyſelf, and walk with thy God;" we muſt watch over our carriage, that we do not grieve the ſpirit of God: for then, although the firſt peace eſtabliſhed in converſion, ſhould be never taken away, yet God interdicts our comfort, we cannot daily enjoy our peace without watchfulneſs; but God ſuffers our knowledge, and our former illumination, to laſh our conſcience, and to be more miſerable in our inward man, than a carnal man who never had ſight of goodneſs; O, the miſery of a man who is fallen into ill terms with God, who had peace before; of all men he hath moſt horror, till he have made his peace again. Watchfulneſs will prevent this.

2. And becauſe it is a difficult thing to maintain terms of peace with God, in regard of our indiſpoſition, we fall into breaches

breaches with God daily, and therefore we ſhould often renew our covenants and purpoſes every day.

And if we have fallen into any ſin, let us make uſe of our great peace-maker, Chriſt, who is in heaven, to make peace between and God us, let us deſire God for his ſake, to be reconciled unto us, for God is in Chriſt reconciling us unto him ſtill, the fruit of Chriſt's death remains ſtill, let us deſire him to teſtify it unto us by his holy ſpirit.

3. And take that direction of the Apoſtle, in Philip. iv. When we find any trouble in the world, not to trouble ourſelves over much: "In nothing be careful," &c. No, ſhall we caſt away all care? Caſt your care upon God; let your requeſts be made known to God with thankſgiving, let your prayers be made to God, and let him have his tribute of thankſgiving, for what you have received already. What then? "The peace of God that paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep and preſerve your hearts and minds in Chriſt Jeſus:" perhaps, we ſhall not have what we pray for, when we have made our requeſts known to God; if we have not what we pray for preſently, yet we ſhall have the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, and ſhall keep our hearts and minds; therefore, when any thing troubles us, let us conſider there is peace between God and us; let us put up our requeſts in the name of Chriſt, and we ſhall find that peace which paſſeth underſtanding.

4. Again, if we would maintain this peace, let us be always doing ſomewhat good and pleaſing to God: in the ſame chapter, Phil. iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, &c. think of theſe things; and what then? "the God of peace ſhall be with you—the peace of God, and the God of peace ſhall be with you:" there muſt be a thinking of whatſoever is good; the thoughts muſt be exerciſed that way, and there muſt be a practice of what we think of; this is one means to maintain this peace with God. The very heathen had this reward of God, I mean in this life, that when they did good to their country, and one to another, they had content of conſcience, they had a peace ſuitable. For, in this world, there is a ſuitable pleaſure of conſcience and contentment upon every thing that is good, God rewards it in this world: for, as the heat followeth the fire always, naturally it cannot be without heat; ſo the thinking and practiſing of that which is good, eſpecially when it

it is joined with some opposition of corrupt nature, when the light of nature is above the corruption of nature. If a man be a pagan he shall have this reward in this world, a kind of inward peace; for we see how comfortably they speak sometimes, upon some notable performance to their country. Now, the God of peace will be with us much more, when we have laid the foundation of our peace aright, in the mercy of God in Christ, besides what is reserved, heaven and happiness: in this world we shall find the peace of God, in the doing that which is good.

As for those that live in the church, and are not yet in the state of grace, who have lived wicked lives, let them consider, that yet the day of grace continues, as yet the sceptre of mercy is held forth: in the ministry, there is a day of jubilee for them, to return from their former captivity; let them not abuse the patience of God, and think to do it afterward, for that is the way to harden the heart more and more. And this Scripture puts an effectual argument into the hearts of all that are on ill terms with God, who have not made their peace, or who have had peace, and have broken it; here is an effectual way of pleading with God: "Glory to God on high," &c. If the soul can say, I consider my folly, and madness, in running into sin, thou mightest justly damn me, if thou wouldst; it is thy mercy, I am not sent to hell: O, but thou shalt have the greater glory, if I find mercy, therefore, that I may say, glory to God on high, let me find peace on earth, speak peace by thy spirit to my soul, say, I am thy salvation. This was the end of thy sending of Christ, the end of creation, the end of providence, all to bring thee glory: thou mightest have the glory of thy justice to damn me; O, but it will be the glory of thy mercy to save me, that as my sins have abounded, so thy glory shall more abound. O Lord, extend the bowels of thy mercy: will not the Lord be jealous of his glory, when you alledge it? certainly he will, you see the angels here cry, "glory to God on high, peace on earth." The way to bring peace, is to alledge the glory of God's mercy in Christ, it is a prevailing way.

Now, to stir us up more and more, to search the grounds of our peace, 1. I beseech you, let us consider the fearful state of a man who hath not made his peace with God: although Christ has died, that will not serve the turn; but if Christ be food, if he be not eaten—if he be a garment, and not be put on—if Christ be a foundation, and we do not build on him, what benefit

nefit is it to us? Therefore, thoſe that have not been brought by the ſpirit of God to communion with Chriſt; alas, they are under the wrath of God, however God doth uſe them; as princes do traitors in confinement, they give them the liberty of the priſon, but the ſentence of death is not revoked; all the delights of ſuch a priſoner doth not content him, he knows he is in ill terms with his prince: ſo, till we have made our peace with God, by hearty confeſſion of our ſins, and a reſolution againſt all ſin, for the time to come, alas, we have not ſued out our pardon, all our delights are but as thoſe of the traitor in priſon. Therefore, aſk thy ſoul, haſt thou ſued out thy pardon? is there reconciliation wrought between God and thee, and accounts made even? If we confeſs and forſake our ſins, we ſhall find mercy; it is the word of the God of heaven, who is truth itſelf, he has pawned his fidelity and truth on it, to forgive us. If we confeſs, he is content to be thought unjuſt and unfaithful, if he do not forgive, if we ingenuously, without all guile of ſpirit, lay open our ſins, and take ſhame to ourſelves. 2. If we do not make peace with God, what a caſe are we in? God himſelf, ere long, will appear our enemy; Chriſt, who we think will ſave us, will be our judge, and a terrible judge—the Lamb will be angry; "Who ſhall cover us from the wrath of the Lamb?" we think of Chriſt, as an innocent meek lamb only, that will not be angry. The rebellious kings and potentates, that fight againſt Chriſt and his church, they think to trample on Chriſt and his goſpel; but the time will come, when they ſhall deſire the mountains to cover them; and if his wrath be kindled, Pſal. ii. who ſhall abide it? he ſpeaks there of Chriſt, happy are they that truſt in him. 3. As for the holy Ghoſt, how can they look for comfort from him? they have grieved him, therefore he will grieve their conſcience. The Holy Ghoſt, as he is the God of all comfort and conſolation, ſo he is the ground of terror to wicked men, when he hath knocked at their hearts, by the miniſtry of his word, to open, and to let him in, but they would not. 4. The angels are ready executioners of God's vengeance upon any occaſion; and other creatures wait but for a command from God, to execute his wrath upon ſinners; the heavens are ready to rain upon them, as in the flood, and the earth is ready to ſwallow them, as it did Corah; the beaſts which carry us, the creatures we uſe, wait for a command from God to deſtroy us, our meat to choke us, the air to infect us, the water to drown us, they are all ready to ſerve the Lord of hoſts, againſt his enemies, as he ſaith, Iſa. i.

"Ah,

"Ah I will be avenged on mine enemies." Indeed, here God ſhews his patience: and our long life, that we think a great favour, it is a treaſuring up of wrath againſt the day of wrath. And when God's wrath comes, at the day of judgment, when he hath forſaken ſinful men, when God, the judge of all, hath ſaid, depart ye curſed, no creature then ſhall miniſter the leaſt comfort—the ſun ſhall ſhine upon them no more—the earth ſhall bear them no longer; as we ſee Dives, he had not a drop of water to comfort him in thoſe flames. Therefore, if we be not at peace with the Lord of hoſts, every creature is ready to be in arms againſt us. 5. As for the devils, they will be ready to be tormentors, they that are incentives to ſin, will be tormentors for ſin afterwards. 6. As for the church, what comfort can a wicked man look for from the church, whom he hath deſpiſed, and whoſe miniſtry he hath rejected? 7. And for the damned ſpirits, they are all in that curſed condition with himſelf; therefore, where ſhall the ungodly appear? ere long, whence ſhall he hope for comfort? neither from God, nor angels, nor devils, nor wicked men, nor good men—none of them all will yield him the leaſt comfort.

Let us not therefore delude ourſelves, but get into Chriſt, get into the ark in time, that when any public calamity ſhall come, we may be ſafe in Chriſt. If we be at peace with God by repentance of ſins, and by faith in Chriſt, every thing will miniſter thoughts of comfort to us; we cannot think of God, but as our Father, of Chriſt as our redeemer and reconciler, who hath brought God and us together, the Holy Ghoſt takes upon him the term of comforter for ſuch. Angels they are miniſtering ſpirits. As for the church itſelf, God's people, they all have a common ſtock of prayers for us; every one that ſaith, Our Father, thinks of us, and all other things, they are at peace with us, as Job ſaith, "the ſtones in the ſtreets," nay, the ſtone in a man's body, the terrible pangs which come from that diſeaſe, they have a bleſſing upon them; in the greateſt extremities, a ſoul that is at peace with God, although he do not deliver him from the trouble, yet he will deliver and ſupport him in it; and, as the troubles increaſe, ſo his comforts increaſe; and the very troubles themſelves are peace with him, all work for the beſt to them that love God. And, in the greateſt confuſions and tumults of ſtates, yet "the righteous is afraid of no ill tidings," Pſal. cxii. becauſe his heart is fixed upon God's love in Chriſt. The wicked, when war and deſolation, and ſigns of God's

God's anger, appear from heaven, they ſhake as the trees of the foreſt, as wicked Ahaz, Iſa. vii. and Belſhazzar, when there is but a fear of trouble, how did he know that the handwriting was againſt him? it was nothing but his naughty conſcience, he knew not what it was, till it was expounded; ſo, when any troubles come upon wicked men, their conſciences upbraid them with their former life, their knees knock together, and they grow pale as Belſhazzar; O the miſery of a man, who hath not made his peace with God in the evil day, and the comfort of a man who hath! there is the difference between godly and ungodly men, conſider them in calamities, the one is at peace with God in the midſt of all calamities and troubles; nay, as I ſaid, even troubles themſelves are peaceable to him.

Yea, when death comes, which is the end of all, the ſting of it is taken away, and it is for our greateſt good: he that hath made his peace with God, can ſay with old Simeon, "Lord, now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation;" mine eyes have ſeen Chriſt with the eye of faith; he is willing to yield his ſoul to God, becauſe he is at peace with God, their graves are their beds, and their ſouls reſt with God, they die in peace, and commend their ſouls to God, as to a faithful creator, with a great deal of confidence, as St. Paul ſaith, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have run my race, henceforth is reſerved for me a crown of righteouſneſs, and not for me only, but for all thoſe that love the bleſſed and glorious appearing of Chriſt:" O, the comfort of a gracious ſoul, in the hour of death, that hath made its peace with God, when the king of fears, death, ſhall look with a terrible look upon men who have not made their peace; but, to the other, it is the end of miſery, the inlet to eternal happineſs, "Bleſſed are thoſe that die in the Lord," in the peace of the Lord, "they reſt from their labours," from the labour of ſin, of callings, of afflictions, there is no reſting till then. St. Paul himſelf was troubled with the remainders of ſin, with afflictions, and troubles of his calling; but bleſſed are they that die in the peace of God in Chriſt, they reſt from their labours. And, after death, what comfort are thoſe in who have made their peace with God in Chriſt? then their Saviour is to be their judge, he that makes interceſſion for them in heaven, will be their judge; and will the head give ſentence againſt the members, the huſband againſt the wife and ſpouſe? O, no; therefore the godly have comfortable and ſweet thoughts of thoſe

bleſſed

bleſſed times that aſtoniſh wicked men, they have a glorious expectation of the times to come; they cannot think of death and judgment (when their ſouls are in a good frame), without much comfort; "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near." Therefore, let us not conceive ſlightly of this peace, it is not a freedom from petty ills, and an advancement to a little good, but it is from ills that are above nature, from the wrath of God, before which no creature can ſtand, no, not the angels themſelves, from hell and damnation, the curſe of God, from the kingdom of Satan; it is a freedom from that condition, which all the powers of the world ſhall tremble at: how can they ſtand before the anger of God? and, it is an advancement to the greateſt good, a freedom from bondage, an advancement to Son-ſhip; therefore, let us have high thoughts of this peace, as the angels had, when they ſang, "Glory to God on high, on earth peace."

Good will towards men.

Divers copies have it otherwiſe, "On earth peace to men of good will;" ſome have it, "Good will towards men"—the ſenſe is not much different: Peace on earth to men of God's good will, of God's good pleaſure; whom God hath a pleaſure to ſave, or good will towards men, of God's good pleaſure; peace on earth to men of God's good will and pleaſure, or God's good pleaſure towards men.

Good will towards men.

This is the ſpring and root of all. The angels begin with glory to God, and then they come to peace among men, becauſe without peace and reconciliation with God, the heart of man cannot be enlarged to glorify God: the angels would have men glorify God as well as themſelves, therefore they deſire peace on earth, that God may be glorified in heaven. Now, there is no peace but iſſues from grace, grace is God's free good will and pleaſure, therefore, the angels ſay, "Good will towards men."

The holy apoſtles, they could not have better teachers for their ſalutations in their epiſtles, than to learn of the angels; as you have St. Paul's prefaces, the ſame with this evangelical celebration, and gratulation here to men, grace, mercy, and peace; ſo here, peace on earth, good will towards men; only, the apoſtles,

apoſtles, they begin, grace and peace; and there the angels, peace and grace; but the meaning of the angels and apoſtles is all one: for the angels, when they wiſh peace on earth, they go to the ſpring of it, good will towards men; the apoſtles, they begin with grace, the ſpring, and then go to peace after.

The words need not further be explained, there is no great difficulty in them; the points conſiderable are theſe.

1. God now hath a gracious good will towards men.

2. This good will is the foundation of all good.

3. And this is founded upon Chriſt.

The firſt of theſe I will only touch, becauſe it doth but make way to the other.

God ſhews now good pleaſure towards men.

The love that God bears towards man, hath divers terms, from divers relations, as it is a propenſity in him to do good, ſo it is love. As it is his free, ſo it is his good pleaſure or grace; as it is to perſons in miſery, it is mercy. The fountain of all is love. But as the object is diverſely conſidered, ſo the terms be divers, good pleaſure and grace imply freedom in the party loving, and mercy implies miſery in the party loved.

Now this free good will and grace, it is towards men, towards mankind, he ſaith not, towards angels; it is more towards men, then even to good angels (in ſome ſort,) for now man is taken to be the ſpouſe of Chriſt, good angels are not ſo: neither is it good will to evil angels, for their ſtate is determined, there is no altering of their condition: therefore God is called *Philanthropos*, not *Philangelos*; and the ſcripture calls this *Philanthropia*, the love that God hath ſhewn to man in Chriſt. Therefore, we ſhould have thoughts of God, as gracious, in loving our nature, more than the angelical nature in ſome reſpects.

And learn this for imitation, to love mankind. God loved mankind, and ſurely there is none that is born of God, but he loves the nature of man whereſoever he finds it, he will not ſtand altogether, whether it be good or bad, &c. But becauſe we are now in the way, and our ſtate is not determined, and becauſe God loves the nature of man, therefore every man who

hath the ſpirit of God, loves mankind; he will labour to gain Turks or Indians, &c. if he can, becauſe he loves the very nature of man; but I paſs from this point to the ſecond.

This good will of God, to reſtore fallen man, by the ſending of his ſon, is the ground of all good to man, and hath no ground but itſelf.

God's grace and love to the creature, is altogether independent in regard of the creature; God fetcheth not reaſons of his love from the creature, but from his own bowels. What can he foreſee in perſons that were dead? nay, in perſons that were of a contrary diſpoſition to goodneſs? there is nothing but enmity in our nature to ſupernatural goodneſs, can God foreſee grounds of love in enmity?

As Moſes tells the people of Iſrael in divers places. Deut. vii. and 8, that it was not for any foreſight of good in them, they were the moſt ſtubborn people under heaven; therefore God, to ſhew his free love, he choſe a ſtubborn people, and ſingled them out to be the object of his mercy: ſo God oftimes takes the unlikelieſt men in the world, and paſſeth by many, otherwiſe of ſweet natures: ſo, we ſee even the means themſelves, they are of God's free mercy and love.

We have whatſoever we have, by virtue of the covenant: for what could we look for from God but in covenant, wherein he hath bound himſelf? now ſince the fall, this covenant is called the covenant of grace: "That now, if we believe in Chriſt, we ſhall not periſh, but have life and ſalvation:" in all the parts of it, it is of God's free grace and good pleaſure. What is the foundation of the covenant? Chriſt, Chriſt is of free grace, "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only Son." There is nothing freer than a gift. Chriſt is a gift, the greateſt gift, he came freely from God, "he gave him to death for us all," Rom. viii. And then whatſoever good things we have in Chriſt, it comes freely too; he who gave Chriſt freely, ſhall he not with him give us all things too?

Then the very grace to keep the covenant, repentance and faith, they are the gift of God, "I will take away your ſtony hearts, and give you new hearts, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes; I will circumciſe your hearts:" ſo the grace to walk in the covenant of grace, it comes from God. God doth his part, and ours too, to ſhew not only that the covenant of grace is a

covenant

covenant of wondrous love, to give us grace here, and glory hereafter, but that the foundation is of grace, and the performance on our part is of grace; nay, it is of grace, that he would enter into a covenant at all, he humbled himself wondrously, to vouchsafe to enter into covenant, it was humiliation on God's part and exaltation to us, therefore as it is in Zechariah, we may cry, "Grace, grace," there is nothing but grace and free love, in the whole matter of our salvation.

If whatsoever good come to a man, be merely from God's good will; let us empty ourselves and give him the glory of all; it is easily spoken and heard, but not so easily done, for man naturally is proud, and for flesh and blood to be brought to go out of itself, and acknowledge nothing in itself, to give the glory of all goodness and happiness to God's free grace and goodness, it is hard to bring proud nature to do this; but we must beg grace of God to work our hearts to this, more and more to empty ourselves of ourselves, and to give God the glory of all: But,

I come to the last point, because I would end this text at this time.

This free love and grace of God, is only in Christ.

Therefore the angels pronounce it now at the birth of Christ, "Good will to men." All these agree very well, "Christ's free grace" and faith. For what we have by grace, we have only by Christ, because he hath given satisfaction to God's justice, that so grace may be conveyed and derived unto us without prejudice to any other attribute in God, and then the embracing power and grace in us is faith: so these three agree, I say, whatsoever we have from God's free love now, we have it in Christ, the free love of God is grounded in Christ, we in ourselves especially considered in the corrupt mass, cannot be the object of God's love, God cannot look upon us, but in him the best beloved first; therefore all is Christ, in the carriage of it, we are elected in Christ, called in Christ, justified by Christ, sanctified by the spirit of Christ, glorified in Christ: "We are blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things in Christ. This is my beloved Son, I am well pleased in him," it is the same word there, "In whom I delight," Isa. lxii. Out of which the Father takes his speech; "This is the Son I delight in." Now, all God's delight is first fixed in his son, and in us, be-

becauſe we muſt have communion with the ſon: ſo the firſt object of God's free love is Chriſt, and then he looks upon us in him.

The Trinity have a wondrous complacency in looking upon mankind; now in Chriſt, God loves us as redeemed by Chriſt, Chriſt loves us as elected by the Father, and given by the Father's choice to him to redeem; the Holy Ghoſt hath a ſpecial liking to us, as ſeeing the love of the Father in chuſing us, and of the Son in redeeming us. And ſurely if we could ſee likewiſe, thoſe ſweet interviews of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, it ſhould be our main delight too, to ſee how God hath choſen us, and given us to Chriſt to ſave; how Chriſt hath redeemed us, from this very reſpect, that the Father hath choſen us, and given us to him, as it is John xvii. "Thine they were, thou gaveſt them me," and how the Holy Ghoſt is a ſpirit of communion, the "Communion of the Holy Ghoſt," that hath communion with the Father, and the Son, and iſſues and proceeds from them both; how he witneſſeth this love to our ſouls, and applies it to us; the Holy Ghoſt applies all, the Father decreed and ordained all, the ſon works and diſpenſeth all; the conſideration of the point is wondrous comfortable.

Whatſoever good will the Father hath to us, it is as we are in Chriſt.

Queſt.—And why in Chriſt?

Anſ.—Becauſe Chriſt is the firſt thing that God can love, he is the only begotten ſon of God, whoſoever is loved to glory in a ſpiritual order, is loved in the firſt beloved: Chriſt is loved of God, as the character of his own image: the ſon repreſents the Father, he is loved of God as Mediator by office, ſo God looks upon us in Chriſt, as the "Son of his love," ſo he is called by St. Paul, Coloſſ. i.

Then if we conſider ourſelves, this muſt be ſo; alas! we are not objects of God's love in ourſelves, nor cannot be, but in ſome other that is loved firſt, for what are we? and what is the glory to which God loves us? To love ſuch as we to ſuch glory, and to free us from ſuch miſery due, it muſt be by another foundation than ourſelves, therefore God's good pleaſure is founded upon his Son Chriſt: this is a clear point, the Scripture bears much upon it, he is our elder brother, and we muſt be conformed to him,

To

To make some use of it.

Use.—First, We see here, that all that are not in Christ, lie open to the vengeance and wrath of God: his good will towards men is only in Christ.

Again, if all God's good will and pleasure be in Christ, as our high priest, without whom we can offer no sacrifice, as we know whatsoever was not offered by the high priest, it was abominable. There we should look to God in Christ, love God in Christ, perform service to God in Christ, pray to God in Christ, give thanks to God in Christ, desire God in Christ, to make all things acceptable for Christ's sake, because it is in Christ that God hath any good will and pleasure to us.

It is a point of marvellous comfort, that God's love and good pleasure, is so well founded as in Christ. he loves Christ eternally, and sweetly, and strongly, is not God's love to us the same? doth he not love us, with the same love that he loves his son? he loves his mystical body with one love, that is Christ head, and members, John xvii. "That the love thou bearest to me, may be in them:" what a sweet comfort is this! God loves Christ and me with one love, he loves me strongly and sweetly and constantly, as he doth his own son, his love to me is eternal, it is founded upon Christ. The love of a prince, if it be founded on a favourite he loves dearly, must needs be firm and strong. Now God's love to Christ is ardent and strong, and sweet, as possibly can be conceived, there it is so to us, his good will to us being founded on Christ.

Why should a believer fear that God will cast him away? he will as soon leave his love to his own son as to us, if we continue members of his son, it is an indefeasible love, it is a point of wondrous comfort, "what shall separate us," (saith the apostle Rom. viii.) from the love of God, founded in Christ? "neither things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, nor any thing:" many things may sever the soul and body, but there is nothing in the world but sin, that shall sever, either soul or body, from the love of God in Christ, because both body and soul are members of Christ, therefore let us treasure it up, as a point of wondrous comfortable.

To come to an use of trial, how shall we know whether God's good will be to us in Christ, or no? how shall I know that he loves

loves my perſon, that I am in the ſtate of grace and love with him?

Anſwer.—The Holy Ghoſt muſt aſcertain this: for as the work of ſalvation was ſo great, that only God could ſatisfy God, ſo the doubts of man's heart and the guilt of his conſcience when it is upon him, and the fear of God's wrath, upon juſt guilt, is ſuch that God muſt aſſure him, that God is reconciled to him, God the Son muſt reconcile God the Father, and God the Holy Ghoſt muſt ſeal and aſcertain this to the ſoul. The ſoul will never be quiet, before it ſee and know in particular, God reconciled in Chriſt, the Spirit that is God, that is above conſcience, muſt ſeal it to the ſoul, being above conſcience, he can ſet down and quiet our conſcience. Now this ſpirit that worketh in us, and aſſures us of God's good pleaſure, it alters and changeth our diſpoſitions, that we ſhall have a good pleaſure in God, for there is a mutual good pleaſure, God hath a good pleaſure in us as his, and we have a good pleaſure in God, wrought by the ſpirit: the ſpirit not only witneſſeth but worketh this ſweet and gracious diſpoſition to God. God delights in us and we in God, God delights in the church above all things, the church is his wife and ſpouſe, his body, his friends, his children; and thoſe that have the ſpirit of God, delight in them too: Pſal. xvi. "All my delight is in the excellent," and Prov. viii. "My delight is in the ſons of men," ſaith Chriſt; which he ſhewed by taking the baſe nature of man upon him; ſo all that have the ſpirit of Chriſt delight in the church and people of God, "All my delight is in the ſaints on earth:" God ſaith his delight is in his church, Hoſ. ii. So all that have the ſpirit of God, they delight in the people of God.

God delights in obedience, more than ſacrifice: God's people that he delights in, they yield their bodies and ſouls a ſacrifice to God, Rom. xii. They will ſeek out what is well pleaſing and acceptable to God; God accepts them in Chriſt, and he is acceptable to them in Chriſt Jeſus, and they ſeek out what pleaſeth him, and is acceptable to him: as the ſons of Iſaac, ſought out what might pleaſe their old father, what he could reliſh, ſo God's children ſeek out what duties God reliſheth beſt. Thankſgiving is a ſacrifice "with which God is well pleaſed:" is it ſo? then they will ſeek out that which may pleaſe him; God by his ſpirit will work in them a diſpoſition to pleaſe him in all things, therefore the people of God are ſaid to be a "voluntary, free people, zealous of good works," being ſet at liberty,

liberty, the ſpirit infuſing and conveying the love, and good pleaſure of God in Chriſt to them; it ſets their wills at liberty, to deviſe to pleaſe God in all things, they have as David prays, Pſal. li. "A free ſpirit." As God not out of any reſpect from us, but freely from his own bowels loved us, and gave Chriſt to us and delighted in us, ſo the ſoul freely without any baſe reſpects, loves God again. Thoſe therefore that do duties for baſe aims, and forced, as fire out of a flint, not as water out of a ſpring, that duty comes not naturally and ſweetly from them, God hath no pleaſure in them, becauſe they have none in God, but the good they do is extorted, and drawn from them.

Let us try ourſelves therefore, if we have taſted God's good will towards us, we will have a good pleaſure to him again, whatſoever is God's pleaſure ſhall be our pleaſure, what pleaſeth him ſhall pleaſe us. If it pleaſe him to exerciſe us with croſſes and afflictions, and loſſes, what pleaſeth God ſhall pleaſe me, for when hath once loved me freely in Chrſt, every thing that comes from him, taſtes of that free love, if he correct me, it is out of free love and mercy, all "the ways of God are mercy and truth," his way of correction and ſharp dealing, it is a way of love and free mercy, therefore if it pleaſe him, it ſhall pleaſe me, my will ſhall be his will.

Again, if we find the free love of God to us in Chriſt, it will quicken us to all duties, and ſtrengthen us in all conditions. But theſe evidences ſhall ſuffice; let us ſearch our hearts how we ſtand affected to God, and to the beſt things; we delight in them, if God delight in us.

And if we do not find ourſelves yet to be the people of God's delight, towards whom God hath thoughts of love, (as the prophet ſpeaks) what ſhall we do?

Attend upon the means of ſalvation, the goſpel of peace and reconciliation, and wait the good time, and do not ſtand diſputing: this is that which hinders many, their diſputing and cavilling, that perhaps God hath not a purpoſe to ſave me, and that the greateſt part of mankind go the broad way, &c.—Leave diſputing, and fall to obeying. God hath a gracious purpoſe, to ſave all that repent of their ſins, and believe in Chriſt, this is goſpel, "I will leave ſecret things, they belong to God, revealed things belong to me;" I will deſire of God his ſpirit, to repent of my ſins, and to believe and caſt myſelf in the arms

of his mercy in Christ, and then let God do as he please; if I perish, I will perish in the arms of Christ; let us labour to bring our hearts to wait in the use of the means, for God's good spirit to enable me to see my state by nature, and to get out of it, by casting myself upon God's love in Christ.

And object not the greatness of any sin, to hinder the comfort of God's mercy, it is a free mercy, the ground of it is from himself, and not from thee. It was free to Manasses, that had sinned no man more, being a king, and being the son of a good father, his sins spread further than ours can do, answerable to the greatness of his person; being an infinite and free mercy, it extends to the greatest sinners. Let no man pretend any sin or unworthiness, if he seriously repent, if any sin or unworthiness could keep it back, it were something; but it is free mercy and love from God's own bowels in Christ.

And consider how God offers this in the gospel, and lays a command, it is thy duty to have good thoughts of God in Christ. We ought not to suspect a man that is an honest man, and will God take it well at our hands to suspect him, that he is so and so? he makes a shew of his love and mercy in Christ, but perhaps he intends it not: put it out of question by believing: if thou have grace to believe the mercy of God in Christ, thou makest thyself a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven. Thou questionest, whether thou be one that Christ died for, or no; believe in him, and obey him, and thou puttest that question out of doubt: thou doubtest whether God loves thee or no? cast thyself upon the love of God in Christ, and then it is out of question: whosoever hath grace to cast himself upon the free love of God, he fulfils the covenant of grace; stand not disputing and wrangling, but desire grace to obey, and then all questions concerning thy eternal estate are resolved, all is clear.

If these things will not move you, then let all men know, that live in a sinful condition, that they had better have lived in any part of the world, than in those glorious times, and places of light: for when they hear the love of God in Christ, laid open to them, if they will come in and receive Christ, and cast themselves upon him, and be ruled upon him, and still they will not, it shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrha, for Jews, and Turks, and Pagans, and those that worship devils, than for us: for when God offers his free love and mercy in Christ, if we will entertain it, and yet we will none of it, then justice alone shall

shall not condemn us, but mercy shall condemn us, we will none of mercy. There is not the worst man, but would have pardoning mercy; he is content to have God to pardon his sin, but he will not take the whole mercy and love of God in Christ, curing, healing mercy; there are those that live in filthy courses, in prophaneness, in swearing, &c. it is food to them to be malicious, to deprave the best things: serpents feed on poison. They are content to have their sins pardoned, if God will let their filthy nature alone, their poisonful, blasphemous disposition, which exalts itself against God, and let them go on in their course, they will have one mercy, but not another; but we shall never be saved without entire mercy, healing as well as pardoning; whom God loves, he doth not only pardon their sins, but heals their nature; and makes it like unto Christ's, holy and pure.

Those who have not the spirit in them, desiring, altering, and changing, and healing grace, as well as pardoning grace, they are hypocrites.

Let us remember this especially, because it is most useful, and most men are deceived in this; they think, O God is merciful, and his love is free in Christ; and though I be unworthy, yet God will have mercy upon me. But hast thou a secret desire to partake of God's whole mercy and love, to make thee good, as well as to make thee his son, and entitle thee to heaven, to have thy nature altered, to see the deformity of sin, and the beauty of grace? if thou hadst rather have the image of God upon thee, more than any savour in the world, and thou hadst rather be free from the bondage of sin, than any other deliverance? if it be thus, thy state is good.

And, now, considering God's free love, opened now in Jesus Christ, I beseech you, let us study Christ, and labour to get into Christ, daily more and more, that we may be members of Christ; and desire God, daily more and more, to reveal himself in Christ to us, that we may see his face in Christ, that we may know him, in the sweet relations he hath put on him in the gospel.

To know God in general, as a creator, and doing good, &c. the heathens did that by the light of nature, but we should labour to see him in the face of Christ; that is, to see him appeased, and loving us, wishing us well, concerning eternal glory, that must be by the light of the gospel, and by the spirit: therefore,

therefore, in hearing of the word, and reading, and meditating, desire God above all, to reveal by his spirit, his gracious face in Christ, that in Christ we may see him as a father, as a husband, as a friend, in those sweet relations of love that he hath taken upon him. It should be our daily desire of God, to manifest his love more to us in Christ Jesus, than in any other fruits of his love: for there be common fruits, such as health, and friends, and liberty, and quiet government, which are great favours, that we see denied to many nations: O, but the soul that is touched by the spirit of God, and the sense of his own condition by nature, is thus disposed; Lord, I desire that thou wouldst shew the fruits of thy love to me; but I desire not so much those common fruits, that the reprobates may have as well as I. O! shew me by thy holy spirit, that thou hast a particular and peculiar love to me in Christ; and, for this end, give me grace to know the mystery of Christ more and more, and the mystery of my natural corruption; that knowledge that may drive me to make much of thy love, and grace in Christ. Now, the spirit that knows the deep things of God, the depth of God's love to any one in particular, and the depth of our hearts, if we beg the spirit to reveal the deep things of his love to us, in time God will shew unto our souls, that he is our salvation; this shews that the soul is in an excellent temper, that it sets a right value on things, that it prizeth God's favour above all things, which is the nature of faith: for, what is faith, only to believe, in general, that Christ died, &c.? no, but to esteem God's love better than all the world: for, God's love is entire in pardoning, and curing too, by this the soul is raised up to esteem the love and mercy of God, in pardoning, and healing sin, above life itself, Psal. lxiii. "Thy loving-kindness is better than life."

To conclude all with this one motive, the loving kindness of God, when we have it once, it is no barren complimental kindness, it is a loving-kindness which reacheth from everlasting to everlasting, from God's love in chusing, to his love in glorifying us: it is a love that reacheth to the filling of nature with all the happiness it is capable of. In this world, in all misery, one beam of loving-kindness will scatter all clouds whatsoever: what raised the spirit of Daniel in the lion's den, of the three young men in the midst of the furnace, or St. Paul in the dungeon?—the beams of God's love in Christ broke into the prison, into the dungeon; a few beams of that will enlarge the heart

heart more than any affliction in the world can caſt it down. It is excellent what Moſes ſaith, Deut. xxxiii. "The good pleaſure of him that dwelt in the buſh," &c. You know that God appeared in the buſh, when it was flaming; the flaming buſh ſhewed the ſtate of Iſrael in the midſt of the furnace of perſecution; yet, notwithſtanding the buſh was not conſumed, why? becauſe the good will of God was in the buſh. So let us be in any perſecution, if we be like Moſes' buſh, all on fire, yet the fire ſhall not conſume nor hurt us, becauſe the good pleaſure of him who dwelt in the buſh is with us. In Iſa. xliii. "I will be with thee in the fire and in the water," not to keep thee out, but I will be with thee in it; ſo that in the greateſt perſecutions that can be, in the fiery trial, as St. Peter calls it, "the good will of him that dwelt in the buſh will be with us;" ſo that we ſhall not be conſumed, though we be in the fire. Though we are afflicted, we need not deſpair, for the good pleaſure of God dwells in the buſh, in the church, in the midſt of afflictions and perſecutions, he is with us; who can be miſerable, that hath the preſence of God, the favour and good will of God?

THE

THE CHURCH's RICHES BY CHRIST's POVERTY.

2 COR. viii. 9.

"*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet he became poor for your sakes, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*"

THE nature of man is very backward to do good, our hearts being like to green wood that hath but a little fire under it, which must be continually blown up; so those sparks of grace that are in us must be stirred up. Therefore, the apostle being to stir up these Corinthians to beneficence and bounty towards the poor, he labours to enforce it, by many reasons, in this and the next chapter. Man being an understanding creature, God would have what we do in matters of religion, to proceed from principles becoming men and christians; therefore he sets us upon duties from reasons: and, because examples, together with reasons, are very forcible, therefore the apostle, after many forcible reasons to be liberal to the saints, he joins examples, first of the Macedonians, who were a poorer people than the Corinthians to whom the apostle now wrote. But, because people are not so comfortably led by the example of equals, or inferiors, they think it a kind of upbraiding of them, accounting themselves as good, or better than they: therefore, the apostle leaves exhorting them from the example of the Macedonians, who were poor, and propounds an example beyond all exception, the example of Christ himself: he stirs them up to bounty and goodness, by the example of him who is good-

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ness itself—"you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he were rich, he became poor," &c. as if he should have said, if the example of the poor Macedonians will not move you to give bountifully, yet let the example of our Saviour; he was rich, yet he became poor to enrich you, therefore you must not think much to bestow somewhat on his poor members.

Examples have a very great force in moving, especially if they be examples of great persons, and those that love us, and we them, and that are near us. The example of Christ, it is the example of a great person. and one that loves us, and whom we ought to love again, therefore the apostle propounds that.

He might have alleged the precepts of Christ: there are many commands that Christ gives of bounty and liberality to the poor—"Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful; and give freely, looking for nothing again; and, the poor ye shall have always with you." But because example hath a more alluring power, it moves more freely: precepts have a more compelling force: therefore, herein he follows the stream of our disposition, which rather desires to be easily drawn, than to be forced and pressed; he brings not the precept, but the example of Christ; "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

The points considerable in the words are, First of all, that

Christ was rich.

There is no question to be made of this truth, Christ was rich, because he was the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God, the heir of heaven and earth—rich every way. When he was poor, he was God then, though he covered his Godhead with the veil of humanity, with our base and beggarly nature that he took upon him, he was always rich. But especially this hath reference to what he was before he took our nature, he was rich, because he was God; and indeed God only is rich to purpose, independently and eternally rich. Riches imply, among other things, plenty, and plenty of precious, and good things, and property; they must be good things that are our own. Christ had plenty of excellent things, and they were his own; he was not only rich in treasure, as he saith, "gold is mine, and silver is mine," but heaven and earth that contains all treasures

ſures are his: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof, and it is he that made the heavens;" he that made heaven and earth muſt needs be rich; nay, if there were need, he can make a thouſand heavens, and earths, he is not only mighty, but almighty, not only ſufficient, but all-ſufficient, he can do what may be done, he can do what he hath done, and more than he hath done, and more than we can conceive, he can remove all difficulties that hinder him; he is rich in power, and wiſdom, every way. The point is very large, but it is not ſo pertinent to the text to ſhew what he was in himſelf, but what he was for our ſakes, therefore I will be ſhorter in it.

Hence then you ſee what Chriſt was before he was exhibited; he did good before he appeared, he was rich before he took our nature upon him, he was God before he was man. Againſt the curſed hereſy of Arius, (which I will not now take up again) but undoubtedly you ſee here a good ground of that grand article of our faith, Chriſt was God before he took our nature: he came, therefore he was before he came; he was ſent, therefore he was before he was ſent; he was God, before he was God manifeſt in the fleſh. In Phil. ii. 6, it is largely, and excellently ſet down. "Let the ſame mind be in you that was in Chriſt Jeſus, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but was made of no reputation; he took upon him the form of a ſervant, and made in the likeneſs of man, he was found in the faſhion of a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even to the death of the croſs, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above all names." It is a large comment and explication upon this text, he was God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God.

The devils, (which were angels before they fell), would be gods by uſurpation and robbery; they were not content in the place they were in, but they would be gods, independent of themſelves; it was robbery for them to do it; therefore, from that high place of excellency they were thrown down to the loweſt hell, of angels they became devils. But Chriſt was God, not by uſurpation and robbery, againſt God's will; but he was God by nature; he thought it no robbery, no diſparagement, nor uſurpation, to be equal with God, he did God no wrong in it. Therefore, when he became man, he was not caſt into theſe inferior parts of the world, to puniſh him, as if he had been

been an uſurper; but it was a voluntary taking of our nature on him, "being rich he became poor, and being in the form of God he made himſelf of no reputation." If he had uſurped his divinity, his abaſement had been violent againſt his will; you ſee then that Chriſt was rich as God.

Therefore before he took our nature upon him, he was mediator from the beginning, he was "yeſterday, to day, and to morrow, and the ſame for ever," as the apoſtle ſaith, "he was, and is, and is to come, he was the lamb ſlain from the beginning of the world." For howſoever he took our nature upon him, and paid the debt, yet he undertook the payment before the beginning of the world. A man may let a priſoner looſe now, upon promiſe to pay the debt a year after: ſo Chriſt undertook our nature, and to pay our debt in the fulneſs of time; by virtue therefore of his future incarnation, he was an effectual mediator from the beginning of the world. As we have now the fruit of his mediation though his death be paſt, the act is paſt, but the fruit remains: ſo that he was a mediator before he came in the fleſh, becauſe he undertook to his Father to diſcharge the office.

Queſt.—But Chriſt being God, was it needful that he ſhould become poor? might not an angel, or ſome other creature have ſerved for the work?

Anſw.—No, God being rich muſt become poor, or elſe he had not been able to bring us back again to God. It is an act of divine power to bring us back again to God; and he that ſhall ſettle us in a firmer ſtate than we had in Adam, muſt be God; to ſtabliſh us ſtronger, and to convey grace to us, to make our ſtate firm, only God can do it. There are ſome things in the mediation of Chriſt that belongs to miniſtry, and ſome things to authority, thoſe that belong to miniſtry, are to be a ſervant, and to die, and that he muſt be man for; but there are ſome things belong to authority and power, as to bring us back to God, to convey his ſpirit to preſerve us from Satan our great enemy, for theſe works of authority, it was requiſite he ſhould be God. In a word, the greatneſs of the ill we were in, required it: who could deliver us from the bondage of Satan, but God, he muſt be ſtronger than the ſtrong man that muſt drive him out: who could know our ſpiritual wants, the terrors of our conſcience, and heal and comfort them, but God by his ſpirit? who could free us from the wrath of the great God, but he that is equal with God?

2. And then in regard of the great good we have by him, to reſtore us to friendſhip with God, and to preſerve us in that ſtate, to convey all neceſſary grace here, and to bring us to glory after, it was neceſſary he ſhould be God, therefore he was rich, and became poor. It is rather to be admired than expreſſed, the infinite comforts that ſpring hence, that he who hath undertaken to reconcile us, to make our peace, to bring us to heaven, is God the ſecond perſon in the Trinity.

All the three perſons had a hand in this work; God the father ſent him, and the Holy Ghoſt ſanctified that maſs which his body was made of, but he himſelf wore the body. The father gives his ſon in marriage, the ſon married our nature, and the Holy Ghoſt brings them both together; he ſanctified our nature, and fitted it for Chriſt to take; ſo, though all three perſons had a work, yet God the ſecond perſon of rich became poor: And, indeed, who was fitter to bring us to the love of God, than he who was his beloved Son? who was fitter to reſtore us to the image of God, than he who was the image of God himſelf? and to make us wiſe, than he who was the wiſdom of God himſelf? there was infinite wiſdom in this. I will not be larger in that point—Chriſt was rich.

The next thing I obſerve is this, that

Chriſt became poor.

The poverty of Chriſt reacheth from his incarnation to his reſurrection, all the ſtate of his humiliation, it goes under the name of his poverty; the reſurrection was the firſt ſtep or degree of his exaltation; he wrought our ſalvation in the ſtate of humiliation, but he applies it in the ſtate of exaltation. The incarnation of Chriſt, it was an exaltation to our nature, to be united to God, to the ſecond perſon in the Trinity. It was a humiliation of God, for the divine nature to ſtoop ſo low as to be vailed under our poor nature, ſo that God could ſtoop no lower than to become man, and man could be advanced no higher than to be united to God; ſo that, in regard of God, the very taking upon him of our nature, it was the firſt degree and paſſage of his humiliation.

But, when did he take upon him our nature? He took it upon him after it was fallen, when it was obnoxious to ſuffering, not as it was innocence, free from all miſery and calamity; but

but when it was at the worſt. And he not only took our nature, but our condition; he took upon him the form of a ſervant; he was not only a ſervant in regard of God, but in regard of us; for he came into the world not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter; he took upon him our nature when it was moſt beggarly, and with our nature he took our baſe condition. Nay, that is not all, he took upon him our miſeries, all that are natural, not perſonal, he took not the leproſy, the gout, &c. but he took all the infirmities that are common to the nature of man, as hunger, and thirſt, and wearineſs; he was ſenſible of grief.

He took upon him likewiſe our ſins, ſo far as there is any thing penal in ſin in reſpect of puniſhment. You know there is two things in guilt, there is the demerit and deſert of it, and there is an obligation to puniſhment; now, the obligation to puniſhment he took upon him, though the merit and deſert he took not; he became ſin, that is, by ſin he became bound to the puniſhment for ſin; he took not the demerit; for, in reſpect of himſelf, he deſerved no ſuch death as he underwent. To clear this a little farther, he took upon him our nature, that he might become ſin for us, he took upon him the guilt, as far as guilt is an obligation to puniſhment. The ſon of a traitor loſeth his father's lands, not by any communion of fault, but by communion of nature, becauſe he is part of his father: ſo Chriſt took the communion of our nature, that he might take the communion of our puniſhment, not of our fault; as the ſon is no traitor, but becauſe he is part of his father who was a traitor; ſo by his nearneſs and communion with his father, he is wrapped in the ſame puniſhment.

In a city that is obnoxious to the king's diſpleaſure, perhaps there are ſome that are not guilty of the offence that the body of the city is, yet being all citizens, they are all puniſhed, by reaſon of their communion: ſo, in this reſpect, Chriſt became poor, he took upon him our nature, and by communion with that nature, he took upon him whatſoever was penal, that belonged to ſin, though he would not, nor could take the demerit of ſin.

"He was made ſin for us;" we cannot have a greater argument of Chriſt's poverty, than to be made ſin for us; ſin is the pooreſt thing in the world, and the cauſe of all beggary and poverty and miſery: he was made under the law, and ſo became a curſe for us, he was made ſin, a ſacrifice for our ſin. In par-

ticular, he was born of a poor virgin, and inſtead of a better place, he was laid in an inn, and in the baſeſt place of the inn, in the manger. As ſoon as he was born, his birth was revealed to poor ſhepherds, not to emperors and kings, not to Cæſar at Rome. Then preſently after his birth, he was baniſhed together with his mother into Egypt. When he came home again, he was fain to be beholden to a poor woman for a cup of water, John iv. when he was thirſty. Again, when he had to pay tribute, he had not whereveith to pay it, but was fain, (as it were) to be beholden to a fiſh for it. And though he made heaven and earth, yet he had no habitation of his own; "the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." When he was to ride in pomp to Jeruſalem, he had not a beaſt of his own, he was fain to ſend for, and ride upon another man's aſs—all his life was a ſtate of poverty.

He was poor in death eſpecially; for when life is gone, all is gone; he gave himſelf to death for us: in death he was poor every way; they ſtripped him of all his clothes, he had not ſo much as a garment to cover him; he was poor and deſtitute in regard of friends, they all forſook him when he had need of them moſt, as he foretold, they ſhould all leave him. And, as he was this poor in reſpect of his body and condition, ſo he was poor in ſoul, in ſome reſpects, and indeed the greateſt poverty was there, for the greateſt riches that Chriſt eſteemed, it was the bleſſed communion that he had with his father, which was ſweeter to him than all the things in heaven and earth. When his father hid his face from him, that he felt his diſpleaſure, (becoming our ſurety), in the garden before his death, the ſenſe of God's diſpleaſure affected him ſo deeply, that he ſweat water and blood; he was ſo poor, wanting the comforts of his father's love, that an angel, his own creature, was fain to come and comfort him. And, at his death, when he hung on the croſs, beſides the want of all earthly comforts, he wanted the ſenſe of that ſweet love which he had always enjoyed before; it made him cry out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" not that indeed God had forſaken him, in regard of protection and ſupport, or in regard of love and favour, but in regard of ſolace and comfort which he had felt before, in regard of the ſenſe of divine juſtice being then upon him that ſtood ſurety for ſin. When he was dead he had no tomb of his own to lie in, he was fain to lie in another man's tomb; and then he was

held

held under the captivity of the grave three days; so that from his birth to his death, there is nothing but a race of poverty.

And (which adds to the abasement of Christ) it was from an excellent condition to so low a state; as we say, it is a miserable thing for a man to have been happy, it makes him more sensible of his misery than other men: for Christ, who was always in the presence and favour of heaven, to come into the virgin's womb; for him to stand in need of the necessaries of this life, for life to die, for riches to become poor, for the glory of heaven and earth to be abased, for the Lord of all to become a servant to his own servants—it must needs be a great abasement to him who was so highly advanced, to become so poor.

But though Christ became thus poor, yet he ceased not then to be rich; but that his riches was veiled with our flesh. The sun, though he be kept from the sight by clouds, he is the sun still; and hath his own proper lustre still; he is as glorious in himself as ever he was, though he be not so to us: so Christ veiled his divinity under our human nature, and under our misery; he became man, and a curse; therefore, though he were the sun of righteousness, glorious in himself, yet to appearance he was otherwise, he became poor.

The papists would have him a beggar. Bellarmine, to countenance begging friars, would have Christ to be so; it is a disgraceful false conceit. If we divide his life, before he was thirty years old that he was invested into his office, he lived with his parents in that calling, and submitted to them, he was no beggar; afterwards he lived by ministering the word of God, and this was not beggary but honour. It is not charity that is given to governors and ministers, it is not alms to receive temporal things for spiritual, but it is due. Besides, he had somewhat of his own; he had a bag, and Judas was good enough to carry it, he gave to the poor, therefore he was not a beggar: for he who came to fulfil the law, would not break the law. The law forbids beggars, it was one of Moses' laws, "There shall not be a beggar among you;" so much briefly for that—"Christ was rich, and became poor."

The next point is, the parties for whom this was.

For your sakes.

Why doth not the apostle say, for our sakes, and take him-

ſelf in the number? He applies it to ſerve the argument in hand, being to ſtir up the Corinthians to bounty; he tells them Chriſt was poor for their ſakes, that they might be aſſured of their ſalvation by Chriſt; that his example might be more effectual: the example of thoſe whom we have intereſt in is effectual, therefore he ſaith, "for your ſakes he became poor." This ſhould teach us, when we ſpeak of Chriſt, to labour for a ſpirit of application, to appropriate Chriſt unto ourſelves, or elſe his example will not move us; as, without application, we can have no good by him, ſo we can have no comfort by his example; it is not prevalent, unleſs we can ſay as the apoſtle to the Corinthians here, for your ſakes.

Again, for your ſakes, not for himſelf; he became poor not to make himſelf richer, he did it not for merit to himſelf, what need he? for by virtue of the union of the human nature with the Godhead, heaven was due to him at the firſt moment, as ſoon as he was born; What ſhould hinder him? had he any ſin of his own? No, there was nothing to keep him from heaven, and all the joy that could be, in reſpect of himſelf; but he had our ſalvation to work, he had many things to do and ſuffer, and therefore of his infinite goodneſs, he was content that the glory which was due to him ſhould be ſtayed, he became a ſervant to appeaſe his Father's wrath for us, and procure heaven for us, for us men, for us ſinners, as it is in the ancient creed, and as the prophet ſaith, "to us a child is born, to us a ſon is given:" for us he was born, for us he was given, for us he lived, for us he died, for us he is now in heaven, and for us he humbled himſelf to death, even to the death of the croſs, to a curſed death. Therefore, when we hear of Chriſt's poverty, let us think, this for me, not for himſelf, and this will increaſe our love, and our thankfulneſs to him.

Again, it was for us, for mankind, not for angels; for, when they fell, they continued in that lapſed ſtate for ever: this advanceth God's love to us more than to thoſe noble creatures the angels, who remain in their curſed condition to all eternity.

The end of Chriſt's becoming poor.

"That we through his poverty might be made rich."

Queſt.—How are we made rich by the poverty and abaſement of Chriſt?

Anſw.—By the merit of it, and by efficacy flowing from Chriſt:

Chriſt: for, by the merit of Chriſt's poverty, there iſſued ſatisfaction to divine juſtice, and the obtaining of the favour of God, not only for the pardon of our ſins, but favour and grace to be entitled to life everlaſting; and then, by efficacy we are enriched by the power of his ſpirit, who altereth and changeth our natures, and makes them like to the divine nature.

Queſt.—But, more particularly, what are the riches which we have by the poverty of Chriſt?

Anſ.—Firſt, our debt muſt be paid before we could be enriched, we were indebted for our ſouls and bodies, we owed more than we were worth; we were under Satan's kingdom, therefore Chriſt diſcharged our debt. There is a double debt that he diſcharged, the debt of obedience and the debt of puniſhment; Chriſt ſatisfied both; for the debt of obedience, he fulfilled the law perfectly and exactly for us; and, for the debt of puniſhment he ſuffered death for us, and ſatisfied divine juſtice; ſo, by his poverty we are made rich, by way of ſatisfaction for our debts.

And, not only we are made rich by Chriſt paying of our debts, but he inveſts us into all his own riches; he makes us rich, partly by imputation, and partly by infuſion.

By imputation, his righteouſneſs and obedience is ours, his diſcharge for our debts is imputed to us, and likewiſe his righteouſneſs for the attaining of heaven: he having ſatisfied for our ſins, God is reconciled to us; and thereupon we are juſtified and freed from all our ſins, becauſe they are puniſhed in Chriſt: for the juſtice of God cannot puniſh one ſin twice; ſo we come to be reconciled becauſe we are juſtified, and we are juſtified from our ſins, becauſe Chriſt, as a ſurety, hath diſcharged the full debt.

And hence it is that we are freed from all that is truly ill, from the wrath of God, and eternal damnation; and freedom from the greateſt ill hath reſpect to the greateſt good: for, what had we been, if we had lain under that curſed condition? But God's works are compleat, he works like a God, therefore we are not only freed from evil in juſtification, but entitled to heaven, and life everlaſting.

And then he makes us rich by infuſion of his holy ſpirit, by working all needful graces of ſanctification in us; for by the virtue of Chriſt's death, the ſpirit is obtained, and by the ſpirit

our natures are changed: ſo we have the riches of holineſs from Chriſt, the graces of love, of contentment, of patience, and courage, &c. "of his fulneſs we receive grace for grace," grace anſwerable to the grace that is in him, the ſame ſpirit that ſanctified his human nature, and knit it to his divine, it ſanctifieth his members, and makes them rich in grace and ſanctification, which is the beſt riches.

Then again, we are rich in prerogatives, we are the ſons of God by adoption; "what love (ſaith the apoſtle) hath the Father ſhewed, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God?" and this we have by the poverty of Chriſt: whatſoever Chriſt is by nature, we are by grace; he is the ſon of God by nature, we are his ſons by grace; and, being ſons, we are heirs, heirs of heaven, heirs of the world, as much as ſhall ſerve for our good, all things are ours by virtue of our adoption, becauſe we are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's: there is a world of riches in this, to be the ſons of God.

And what a prerogative is this, "that we have liberty, and boldneſs to the throne of grace," as it is in Epheſ. iii. that we have boldneſs to appear before God, to call him Father, to open our neceſſities, to fetch all things needful, to have the care of the king of heaven and earth, to be favourites in the court of heaven: every Chriſtian may now go boldly to God, becauſe the matter of diſtance, our ſins, which made a ſeparation between God and us, they are taken away, and the mercy of God runs amain to us, our nature in Chriſt ſtanding pure and holy before God.

And then we have this grand prerogative, that all things ſhall turn to the beſt to us. What a privilege is this, that there ſhould be a bleſſing in the worſt things, that the worſt things to a child of God ſhould be better than the beſt things to others, that the want and poverty of a Chriſtian ſhould be better than the riches of the world: becauſe there is riches hid in his worſt condition: Moſes eſteemed the rebuke of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt. A croſs, or the want of any bleſſing ſanctified, is better than the thing enjoyed which hath not God's bleſſing with it. A Chriſtian is ſo rich, that he is bleſſed in his very afflictions and ſufferings; it is a greater prerogative to have ill turned to our good, than not to have the ill at all. It is an argument of greater power, and of greater goodneſs, that God ſhould turn the greateſt ills, the greateſt wrongs

wrongs and diſcomforts, to the greateſt good, as he doth to his children; for by them he draws them neareſt to himſelf. Hereupon the apoſtle ſaith, "all things are yours, things preſent, and things to come," &c. reductively they are ours, God turns them to our good, he extracts good to us by them; all good things are ours in a direct courſe; and other things, by an overruling power, are deduced to our good, contrary to the nature of the things themſelves. What! did I ſay all things are ours? yea God himſelf is ours, and he hath all things that hath him to whom all things belong: now, in Chriſt, God himſelf is become ours—"all things are yours, you are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's; and in Rom. v. 10, we rejoice in God as ours; if God be ours, his all-ſufficiency is ours, his power is ours, his wiſdom—all is ours for our comfort.

Again, for glory, the riches of heaven, which are eſpecially here meant, for however the riches of heaven be kept for the time to come, yet faith makes them preſent; when by faith we look upon the promiſes, we ſee ourſelves in heaven, not only in Chriſt our head, but in our own perſons, becauſe we are as ſure to be there, as if we were there already: but, for the joys of heaven, they are unutterable, the apoſtle calls them, Epheſ. iii. 8. "unſearchable riches, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him:" there ſhall be fulneſs of glory in ſoul and body, both ſhall be conformable to Chriſt. "At the right hand of God, there is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore."

Nay, the firſt fruits, the earneſt, the beginnings of heaven here are unſearchable to human reaſon, the riches of Chriſt's righteouſneſs imputed to us, the glorious riches of his ſpirit, in inward peace of conſcience, and joy in the holy Ghoſt; the comfort and enlargement of heart in all conditions, it is peace that paſſeth underſtanding, and joy unſpeakable and glorious; it is not only unſearchable to human reaſon, but Chriſtians themſelves, who have the ſpirit of God in them, cannot ſearch the depth of them, becauſe we have the ſpirit but in meaſure. We ſee then what excellent riches we have by the poverty of Chriſt.

Queſt.—Was there no other way to make us rich, but by Chriſt's becoming poor?

Anſw.—God in his infinite wiſdom ordained this way, he

thought it beſt; we may reſt in that; but, beſides, to ſtay our minds the better, we were to be reſtored by a way contrary to that by which we fell; we fell by pride, we muſt be reſtored by humility; we would be like God, who, to expiate it, muſt become like us, and take our nature and ſuffer in it.

Then again, God would reſtore us by a way ſuitable to his own excellency every way, wherein no attribute of his might be a loſer: he would bring us to riches and friendſhip with him, by a way of ſatisfaction to his juſtice, that we may ſee his juſtice ſhine in our ſalvation, (though indeed grace, and mercy triumph moſt of all, yet notwithſtanding) juſtice muſt be fully contented. There was no other way wherein we could magnify ſo much the unſearchable, and infinite wiſdom of God (which the angels themſelves pry into) whereby juſtice and mercy, ſeeming contrary attributes in God, are reconciled in Chriſt: by infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and mercy meet together, and kiſs one another, juſtice being ſatisfied, wiſdom is exalted; but what ſet wiſdom to work? the grace, and love, and mercy of God, to deviſe this way to ſatisfy juſtice, it could not have been done any other way: for before we could be made rich, God muſt be ſatisfied: reconciliation ſuppoſeth ſatisfaction, and there could be no ſatisfaction but by blood, and there could be no equal ſatisfaction, but by the blood of ſuch a perſon as was God. Therefore Chriſt muſt become poor to make us rich, becauſe there muſt be full ſatisfaction to divine juſtice, and all his precious poverty before his death, his incarnation, his want, his being ſervant, &c. all was part of his general humiliation, but it was only to prepare him for his laſt work, the upſhot of all, his death, which was the work of ſatisfaction.

Again, all the inherent part of our riches, infuſed into our nature, it comes by the ſpirit of God; now the ſpirit of God had not been ſent, if God had not been ſatisfied, and appeaſed firſt; becauſe the Holy Ghoſt is the gift of the Father, and the Son, he comes from both; therefore there muſt be ſatisfaction and reconciliation before the Holy Ghoſt could be given, which enricheth our nature immediately; the immediate cauſe of ſending the Holy Ghoſt is Chriſt's coming in our nature: Now if God had not been ſatisfied in his juſtice, he would never have given the Holy Ghoſt which is the greateſt gift next to Chriſt, therefore "Chriſt became poor to make us rich," that we might have the Holy Ghoſt ſhed in our hearts.

Now all theſe riches that we have by Chriſt, it ſuppoſeth union

nion with him by faith, as the riches of the wife ſuppoſeth marriage; union is the ground of all the comfort we have by Chriſt; our communion ſprings from union with him, which is begun in effectual calling, as ſoon as we are taken out of old Adam, and ingrafted into him, all becomes ours. Chriſt procures the ſpirit, the ſpirit works faith, faith knits us to Chriſt, and by this union we have communion of all the favours of this life and the life to come: therefore I ſay all is grounded upon union by the grace of faith. Chriſt married our nature that we might be married to him by his ſpirit; and until there be a union there is no derivation of grace and comfort. The head only hath influence on the members that are knit unto it: therefore Chriſt took our nature, that he might not only be a head of eminency (as he is to angels) but a head of influence: Now there muſt be a knitting of the members to the head, before any ſpirits can be derived from the head to the members; therefore the apoſtle ſaith, that Chriſt is our riches: but it is as he is in us, "To whom God would make known, what is the riches of this myſtery among the Gentiles: Chriſt in you the hope of glory." Chriſt is all to us, but it is as he is in us, and we in him, we muſt be in him as the branches in the vine, and he in us as the vine in the branches; ſo Chriſt is the hope of glory, as he is in us. We muſt labour therefore by faith to be made one with Chriſt, before we think of theſe things with comfort.

And when by faith we are made one with Chriſt, then there is a ſpiritual communion of all things. Now upon our union with Chriſt, it is good to think what ill Chriſt hath taken upon him for me, and then to think myſelf freed from it, becauſe Chriſt that took it on him, hath freed himſelf from it:—whatſoever he is freed from, I am alſo freed from it, it can no more hurt me, than it can hurt him now in heaven; therefore when I think of ſin and hell, and damnation, and wrath, I ſee myſelf freed from it in Chriſt, "he became poor" to take this away from me, my ſins were laid on him, and he is juſtified and acquitted from them all, and from death, and the wrath of God that he underwent, and I am acquitted in him by virtue of my union with him, and the devil can no more prejudice the ſalvation of a believer, then he can pull Chriſt out of heaven.

And as we ſee ourſelves freed from all ill in Chriſt, ſo for all good, ſee it in him firſt, and conveyed by him to us: whatſoever he hath, I ſhall have, he is riſen and aſcended, I ſhall therefore riſe and aſcend, and ſit at the right hand of God for ever with him,

with him, "we shall be for ever with the Lord:" let us see our riches in him; he is rich first as the head of first fruits, and then we as the lump afterwards, the first fruits were sanctified, and then the lump, the first fruits are glorious, and then the rest after; whatsoever we look for in ourselves, see it in him first, and then the consideration of a Christian condition is a comfortable consideration. Take a Christian in all conditions whatsoever, if he be poor. Christ was poor for him, that his poverty might not be a curse to him: if he be poor, Christ was rich to make him rich in the best riches, and to take the sting out of poverty, and to turn it to his good: if he be abased, Christ was abased for him, to sanctify his abasement; let us labour to see the curse taken away in every thing, and not only so, but to see a blessing in all being made ours, and then it will be a comfortable consideration.

But it may be objected; We see no such thing, we see Christians are as poor as others.

Answ.—The best riches of a Christian are unseen, they are unknown men, as we say of a rich man that makes no shew of his riches, he is an unknown man. It is said of Christ, "all the riches of wisdom are hid in Christ," that which is hidden is not seen, so the riches of a Christian, they are hidden. As Christ was rich when he was upon earth, he was rich in his father's love, and in all graces, but it was hidden riches; they took him to be a poor ordinary man: so a Christian he is a hidden man, his riches are hid, he hath excellent life, but it is a hidden life, "our life is hid with Christ in God," it is not obvious to the eye of the world, not to himself oft-times in the time of desertion, and temptation.

Object.—But you will say; for outward things we see Christians are poor now, as there were poor Christians in St. Paul's time.

Answ.—It is no great matter; the riches we have, especially by Christ, are spiritual in grace here, and glory hereafter; he came to redeem our souls here from sin and misery, and he will hereafter come to redeem our bodies, and invest them into the glory that we have a title to now by him.

Yet also for outward things a Christian is rich, though they be not the main, yet they are the necessary provision in his journey, and he shall have enough to bring him to heaven

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"fear not, little flock, it is your father's will to give you a kingdom," surely if he will give them a kingdom, they shall not want daily bread; upon seeking the kingdom of God, these things shall be cast in unto them.

Again, suppose a Christian be poor, he is rich in Christ; and he bears the purse, but what if a child have no money in his purse, his father provides all necessaries for him, he is rich as long as his father is rich; and can we be poor as long as Christ is rich, being so near us, being our head? we shall want nothing that is needful, and when it is not needful for our good, we had better be without it.

Again, he must needs be rich, whose poverty and crosses are made riches to him. God never takes away, or withholds outward blessings from his children, but he makes it up in better, in inward: they gain by all their losses, and grow rich by all their wants; for how many are there in the world that had not been so rich in grace, if they had had abundance of earthly things? so that though they be poor in the world, they are rich in God, rich in grace, "rich in faith," as St. James saith: The greatest grievances and ills in the world turn to a Christian's sickness, and shame, and death: the spirit of God is like the stone that men talk so of, that turns all into gold, it teacheth us to make a spiritual use, and to extract comfort out of every thing, the worst things we can suffer in the world, "all things are ours" (as I said before) even Satan himself. The spirit of God helps us to make good use of his temptations to cleave faster to the fountain of good.

Again, though a Christian be poor yet he hath rich promises, and faith puts those promises in suit, and presseth God with them. If a man have bonds and obligations of a rich man, he thinks himself as rich as those bonds amount to. There is no Christian but hath a rich faith, and rich promises from God, and when he stirs up his faith, he can put those promises in suit (if it be not his own fault) in all his necessities: therefore a Christian cannot be so poor as to be miserable. I know flesh and blood measure riches after another manner. But is not he richer that hath a fountain, than he that hath but a cistern? A man that is not a Christian, though he be never so rich, he hath but a cistern, his riches are but few, they are soon searched; but a Christian, though he be poor, his riches are unsearchable. Another man, though he be a monarch, his riches may be

be reckoned and caſt up, it is but a ciſtern, and ſuch riches as he cannot carry with him: but a Chriſtian hath a fountain, a mine that is unſearchable, in the rich promiſes of God.

Again, a Chriſtian though he be never ſo poor, yet he hath a rich pawn; ſaith St. Paul, if he "ſpared not his own Son, but gave him up to death for us all, how ſhall he not with him give us all things?" If he has given us ſuch a pawn as Chriſt, who is riches itſelf, ſhall he not with him give us all other things? we have a pawn that is a thouſand times better than what we need: we want poor outward things, but we have Chriſt himſelf for a pawn.

Laſtly, ſometimes God ſees that poverty and want in this world is part of our riches, that it is good for us, and what is good for me is my riches; if poverty be good for me, I will be poor that I may be humble, humility is better than riches; if I be in any want, if I have contentment, it is better than riches: if I fall into trouble, he will give me patience, which is better than friends: A man may have outward things, and be naught: but he that wants outward comfort, and hath ſupply in his ſoul, is it not better? therefore take a Chriſtian in any condition, he is a rich man, and this riches we have by the poverty of Chriſt: "he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

Uſe 1.—We ſee here then that a Chriſtian's eſtate is carried under contraries, as Chriſt was, "he was rich and became poor," he carried his riches under poverty, he was glorious, but his glory was covered under ſhame and diſgrace: ſo it is with a Chriſtian, he goes for a poor man in the world, but he is rich, he dies, but yet he lives, he is diſgraced in the world, but yet he is glorious. As Chriſt came from heaven in a way of contraries, ſo we muſt be content to go to heaven in a ſeeming contrary way. Take no ſcandal therefore at the ſeeming poverty, and diſgrace, and want of a Chriſtian, Chriſt himſelf ſeemed to be otherwiſe to the world than he was: when he was poor, he was rich, and ſometimes he diſcovered his riches: there were beams brake forth even in his baſeſt eſtate, when he died; there was nothing ſtronger than Chriſt's ſeeming weakneſs, in his loweſt abaſement he diſcovered the greateſt power of his Godhead; for he ſatisfied the juſtice of God, he overcame death, and his Father's wrath, he triumphed over Satan, he trod on his head, (what hath Satan to do with us when God's juſtice is ſatis-

ſatisfied? ſo that his hidden glory was diſcovered ſometimes; ſo there is that appears in the children of God, that others may ſee them to be rich if they did not cloſe their eyes: but we muſt be content to paſs to heaven as Chriſt our head did, as conceal-ed men.

Again, here is matter, not only for us men, but for the angels of heaven to admire and wonder at this depth of goodneſs and mercy in Chriſt, that he would become poor to make us rich by his poverty: ſee the exaltation of his love in this, ſaith St. Bernard, "O love that art ſo ſweet, why becameſt thou ſo bitter to thyſelf!" whence flowed Chriſt's love, and mercy that was ſo ſweet in itſelf, that it ſhould be only ſour and bitter to him from whence it had its riſe and ſpring? his love that is ſo ſweet to us, it became bitter to him, he endured, and did that which we ſhould have done and ſuffered. There be ſome men that will do kindneſſes, ſo that themſelves may not be the worſe, ſo that they be not the poorer, that they may not be diſ-graced, or adventure the diſpleaſure of others: but Chriſt hath done all this greatneſs for us, by being poor for us, by taking our nature, our poverty, our miſery: he doth us good in ſuch a way as that he parted with heaven itſelf for a time, and with that ſweet communion that he had with his Father, the deareſt thing to him in the world: he parted with it for our ſakes, that made him cry out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou for-ſaken me?" hereupon he made us rich in a way that coſt him ſomething.

And let us be thankful to him in a way that may coſt us ſome-thing; let us be content to be abaſed for him, to do any thing for him; he deſcended from heaven to the grave, as low as he could for us: let us deſcend from our conceited greatneſs for him, can we loſe ſo much for him, as he hath done for us? what are our bodies and ſouls in compariſon of God? It was God that became poor for us, we cannot part with ſo much for him as he did for us. And then we are gainers by him if we part with all the world, whatſoever we do for him. "I will be yet more vile for the Lord," ſaith David, he became vile for us, he became a ſinner, and of "no reputation," and ſhall not we be vile and empty for him? certainly we ſhall, if we have the ſpirit of Chriſt in us, it will work a conformity. If he had ſtood upon terms, and diſdained the virgin's womb, and to become poor for us, where had our ſalvation been? and if we ſtand upon terms when we are to ſuffer for him, or to ſtand for his

his cauſe, where will our comfort be? ſurely it is a ſign we have no right by the poverty of Chriſt, unleſs we be content to part with our Iſaac, with the beſt things we have, when he calls for it.

Again, hath the poverty of Chriſt made us rich; what will his riches do? Could he ſave us when he was at the loweſt, when he was on the croſs, to ſatisfy divine juſtice by his death; what can he do for us now he is in heaven, and hath triumphed over all his enemies? what can we look for now by his riches, that have ſo much by his poverty? therefore we may reaſon with the apoſtle, Rom. v. 10. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being reconciled ſhall we be ſaved by his life?" It is a ſtrong argument, not only as it hath reſpect to us, becauſe there is more likelihood that any good ſhould be done for us now when we are reconciled to God than before, when we were enemies; but alſo as it hath reſpect to Chriſt, ſince he that ſtuck not to reconcile us to God by his death, cannot be unwilling to ſave us by his life: and he that was able to redeem us by dying for us, is more clearly and evidently powerful to ſave us now he lives and reigns triumphantly in heaven. For, is not he able to preſerve us, to protect us, and inveſt us with the glory that he hath purchaſed for us; he that did ſo much for us in the time of his abaſement, will he not preſerve the riches he hath gotten for us? Is he not in heaven in majeſty, to apply all that he hath gotten? Is he not our interceſſor at the right hand of God, to appear before God for us to make all good? Certainly he will preſerve that which he hath procured by his death.

It is a diſabling of Chriſt to think of falling away from grace: he is able to maintain us in that glorious condition that he hath advanced us to: eſpecially, conſidering that he is now in heaven, and hath laid aſide the form of a ſervant; all his humiliation, except our human nature, that for ever he hath united to his perſon, but all other things of his abaſement he hath laid them aſide, he is able perfectly (not only to ſave us, as by his death: but) to apply all that he hath gotten, and preſerve us to life everlaſting. We are kept by the power of God, to that glory that Chriſt hath purchaſed by his death. Therefore why ſhould we fear (for the time to come) falling from grace or the want of that which is good; is not Chriſt able to maintain that which he hath gotten? Let us raiſe our hearts with this conſider-

ſideration, what Chriſt can do now in glory, when his poverty could do this much.

Again, let us deſpiſe no man for his poverty: for Chriſt was poor to make us rich: and as thoſe that deſpiſed Chriſt, and eſteemed him not but hid their faces from him, becauſe he grew up as a root out of a dry ground, becauſe there was no beauty in him, that is, becauſe of his poverty, becauſe he was a carpenter's ſon, they deſpiſed by this means the Lord of glory; ſo thoſe that deſpiſed his poor members afterwards, that "wandered up and down in ſheep-skins and goat skins, being deſtitute and afflicted," they deſpiſed God's jewels, his choice favourites, "of whom the world was not worthy:" Let not the brother of low degree be caſt down becauſe he is poor; nor let not the brother of high degree be lifted up becauſe he is rich: for if riches had been the beſt thing, Chriſt would have been outwardly rich; but Chriſt was poor, to ſhew us what are the beſt riches, and that the riches of this world are but things by the bye, "Seek the kingdom of God, and all other things ſhall be caſt on you," by way of addition and ſupplement. The true riches of a Chriſtian are ſpiritual; Chriſt did not become poor to make us rich in this world, to make us kings and emperors, and great men here, but to make us rich ſpiritually, and to have ſuch a portion of earthly things, as may ſerve us as a proviſion to bring us to heaven: the main riches of a Chriſtian are ſpiritual and eternal, in grace and glory. In popery, they live as if Chriſt came to make them lords of the world; to uſurp juriſdiction over kings and princes: Chriſt came to make us rich in another manner. St. Peter ſaith, "Silver and gold have I none," but his ſucceſſors cannot ſay ſo. Chriſt came not as a ſervant, to make us lords here, much leſs to ſet us at liberty to live after the fleſh, and to do what we liſt. No, the end of Chriſt's coming was to take away ſin, to deſtroy the works of the devil. The common courſe at this time, and deviliſh practice of many, overturns the end of Chriſt's coming, as if he came not to deſtroy, but to let looſe the works of the devil, to let us looſe to all licentiouſneſs; he came to bring us to God, and not to give us liberty in courſes to run farther from God. But that by the way. Chriſt, as I ſaid, came not to make us rich in the things of this life: for, to conſider a little of outward riches, what are they?

1. They are not our own, as Chriſt ſaith, Luke xvi. we are but

but ſtewards, and we muſt give a ſtrict account ere long how we have uſed them.

2. And as they are not our own, ſo they are not true riches, becauſe they do not make us rich. We uſually call a poor man, a poor ſoul; a poor ſoul may be a rich Chriſtian, and a rich man may have a poor ſoul, naked and empty of ſpiritual riches. Theſe are not true riches, becauſe they make not a man better; they may be a ſnare to him, and make him worſe, and puff him up: as every grain of riches hath a vermin of pride and ambition in it. "Charge rich men that they be not high minded;" they may make a man worſe, but they cannot make him better. Can that be true riches which makes a man poorer, that hath not a gracious heart? Surely no; theſe riches are often the hurt of the owners: men are filled as ſponges, and then ſqueezed again. Are theſe true riches which expoſe a man to danger? True riches are ſuch as not only we may do good by, but they make us good. Grace makes us better, it recommends us to God. It is ſaid of Antiochus, a great monarch, he was a vile and baſe perſon, becauſe he was a wicked man. There is no earthly thing can commend a man to God, if he be naught, if he have a rotten prophane heart.

Again, they are not true riches, becauſe a man out-lives them; death deprives him of all; death comes and examines him when he goes out of the world, and will ſuffer him to carry nothing with him. If a man comes to another man's table, and think to carry away his plate, or any thing elſe, he will be ſtopped at the gate, and have it taken from him. Nothing we brought into this world, and with nothing we muſt go out; and are they true riches that terminate in this life?

Then again, theſe riches, they are not proportionable to the ſoul of man: when the ſoul of man hath the image of Chriſt on it, nothing will ſatisfy it but ſpiritual things: there is nothing in the world will ſatisfy a gracious ſoul, but grace and glory. It is only grace, and the ſpiritual things by Chriſt, that are the true riches, that make us good, and continue us good, they continue with us, we carry them to heaven with us. Therefore, as the apoſtle ſaith, we ſhould deſire the beſt things, labour for the beſt things, labour for the beſt portion, that ſhall never be taken from us. When we have many things in this world ſet before us, ſhall we make a baſe choice? as the Gadarenes, to ſave their hogs, they would loſe Chriſt. Shall we make choice

of

of poor things, and leave grace and Chriſt? No, ſince we have judgment to make a difference, let us make a wiſe choice; judgment is ſeen in the choice of different things; for tho' theſe things be good, yet they are inferior; and we loſe not theſe things by labouring for grace, and the beſt things: the beſt way to have theſe things, is to labour for the beſt things. Solomon deſired wiſdom, and he had riches too. "Let us ſeek the kingdom of God, and theſe things, (as far as they be needful) ſhall be added to us." Theſe are the truths of God: therefore let us be aſhamed that we diſcover our ignorance by making a baſe choice, and let us labour to chooſe the beſt things: Chriſt became poor to make us rich in the beſt things, to make us rich in grace, in joy, in peace, and comfort, &c.

Therefore, let us eſteem ourſelves and others highly from henco, and let us not judge by appearance. When Chriſt was put to death, how did the world judge him, a miſerable man, a ſinner, becauſe they judged by appearance; ſo it is the lot of God's children, though they be ever ſo rich, yet thoſe who look upon their outward condition, who judge by appearance, becauſe they are outwardly poor, they think they have no riches at all; but judge not by appearance, as Chriſt ſaith: the life that we have is hidden, our happineſs and riches are hidden with God; yet thoſe that we have now are worth all the world. Is not a little peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and aſſurance that God is ours, worth all worldly things? The leaſt meaſure of grace and comfort is worth all; and yet what we have here is nothing to that which we ſhall have in heaven.

We may be aſhamed the beſt of us all, that we live not anſwerably to our ſtate. We are oft times poorer in grace than we need to be; having ſuch a fountain ſo near us, to periſh for thirſt; to be at a feaſt, and to periſh for hunger; to be at a mine, and to come away beggars. It is a ſign we want ſpiritual ſenſes, it is a ſign of infidelity that we are not capable of ſeeing our ſpiritual wants; that we ſhould profeſs ourſelves to be Chriſtians, to be members of Chriſt, and yet have no grace, no ſpiritual ornaments, no garments to hang on our ſouls, it is a ſign there is no union, becauſe there is no communion. We draw nothing from Chriſt, we are Chriſtians without Chriſt, we have no anointing from Chriſt. Let us take heed that we be not nominal chriſtians, to have only the name of chriſtians. Let us labour to be Chriſtians indeed; and, for that end, conſider

what was the end why Christ became poor, to make us rich. Why should we frustrate his end?

Therefore, let us search what riches we have from Christ, whether our sins be forgiven. We may know we have our sins given, if we have sanctifying grace. God never pays our debts, but he gives us a stock of grace; let us examine therefore what riches we have. Some christians are rich, but they are deceived in their own condition; they think they are poor and beggarly, and have nothing, when they are rich. What is it that deceives them?

Sometimes it is, because they think they have not so much as others, therefore they think they have nothing, not considering the degrees in christianity.

Or, because they have not so much as they would have; as a covetous man, he always looks forward, he is never satisfied; so a Christian, out of a spiritual covetousness, by looking to what he wants, forgets what he hath.

Sometimes a christian, in case of temptations and desertion, conscience may suggest his wants altogether; God will humble him this way, though it may be an error in conscience; yet I would there were more of this kind; such people are to be encouraged, as in Rev. ii. thou sayest thou art poor, and the world thinks so, but thou art rich: so there are many who are poor in their own conceits, who think they have nothing, but indeed they are rich; and they discover their interest in the true riches, by their desire, and hungering, and thirsting after grace; by their care to please God in all things; to approve themselves to God, to do nothing against conscience, by their care in using the means of salvation, and their walking circumspectly; a man may see and discover their riches in their carriage: and, if there be the least degree of grace, it is great riches in regard of inferior things, though it be little in regard of what we shall have in heaven. Let us search what we have, that we may walk thankfully and comfortably. We see worldly men, how they set themselves out in a little riches, and swell in their own conceits. A christian hath that which is infinitely better; and shall he always droop and be cast down? If he be a found christian that hath any goodness in him, let him walk a comfortable and cheerful life, answerable to his riches. We account them base minded men, that being very rich, yet they live as if they had nothing; so christians are to blame, that having great

great riches in Christ, they live as uncomfortably as if they had none. What is the reason (Christ being so rich), that christians have no more grace? Sometimes it is because they search not their own estate for good, as well as bad; and then they do not empty themselves enough, that Christ may fill them. They are not thankful enough for what they have, for thankfulness is the way to get more.

Quest.—How shall we carry ourselves, that we may improve Christ's riches, to be made rich in grace by him?

Answ. 1. First let us labour for the emptying grace of humility, which will empty the soul, and make it of a large capacity to contain a great measure of grace. God fills the hungry with good things, he resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Let us labour to see our wants and necessities, and the vanity of all earthly things, and then we shall be fit to receive grace.

2. And then labour to see the excellency of the grace we want, and that will stretch and enlarge our desires; and withal see the necessity of grace. We must have faith, hope, and love, we cannot live as christians else: we must have contentment, we shall live miserably else: we cannot be like Christ without grace.

3. And withal know that Christ is rich for us: he hath not only abundance of the spirit, but redundance to overflow to us his members; as the head hath redundance of spirits and senses for the use of the whole body, it sees, and feels, and smells, for the use of the whole body: whatsoever Christ hath, he hath for us. Let us labour to know our riches as we are christians; as we grow in other things, so to be acquainted with what we have in Christ's. As children that are heirs to great things, at the first they are ignorant of what they have; but as they grow in years, so they grow in further knowledge of that which belongs to them, and they grow in spirit answerable and suitable to what they shall have: let grace agree with nature in this; let us desire to know our riches in Jesus Christ.

4. And not only know they are ours, but to use ours to our own good and benefit upon all occasions. If we offend God, as every day we do, make use of our riches in Christ, for the pardon of our sins; he is full of favour, he is our high priest, he makes intercession for us. If we want knowledge, he is a

prophet to teach us by his ſpirit. If we find our natures defiled, and want power over our corruptions, he is a king to guide and lead us, in the midſt of all our enemies, to heaven. If we find our conſciences troubled, conſider what peace we have in Chriſt. If we want outward things, let us conſider we are under age; great perſons enjoy not their inheritances when they are under years: if God diſpenſe outward things to us, it is for our good: if he ſend poverty and diſgrace, it is for our good, to fit us for a better ſtate. God, in his infinite wiſdom, knows better what is good for us than we do ourſelves. In the want of any thing, let us believe that Chriſt is given as a public treaſure to the church. Thus we may improve the grace and riches we have in Chriſt.

Again, let us labour to make good uſe of every favour we enjoy, of our liberties and recreations; we have all by the poverty of Chriſt; therefore let us uſe them in a ſober manner, not, as the faſhion is, to caſt off all care for Chriſt, to pour out ourſelves to all licentiouſneſs. Let us conſider this liberty and refreſhing which we have, it is from the blood of Chriſt. As David's worthies, when they brake through with the danger of their lives, to get him water; "O, (ſaith he), I will not drink it, it is the blood of theſe men." So whatſoever liberties and good things I have, I have it by the poverty of Chriſt, by the blood of Chriſt, and ſhall I miſuſe them?

And certainly it will make us eſteem more highly of our ſpiritual privileges than of outward, conſidering they coſt Chriſt ſo dear. He became poor, and ſet us up when we were utterly bankrupt; he ſtripped himſelf of all to make us rich. Shall we not therefore uſe and eſteem theſe things well? And when we are tempted to ſin, this will be a great means to reſtrain us: I am freed from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, ſhall I make him poor again by committing ſin? Shall I wrong him now he is in heaven? The Jews deſpiſed him on earth, in the form of a ſervant; but our ſins are of a higher nature, of a deeper double dye, we ſin againſt Chriſt in heaven, in glory. When we are tempted to ſin, this conſideration will make us aſhamed to ſin, ſince Chriſt hath bought our liberty from ſin at ſuch a rate. Shall we make light of ſin, which coſt him his dear blood, and the ſenſe of his Father's wrath? that made him cry out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" It is impoſſible that any man can pour out himſelf to ſin, who hath

hath this conſideration. Chriſt became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

The next thing is the ground or ſpring from whence all this comes, it is from grace: you know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. It was his mere grace; there was nothing that could compel him; God the Father could not compel him, becauſe he was equal with his Father; being God there was an equality of eſſence.

And then, what was there in us that ſhould move him to abaſe himſelf ſo low? Was there any worth in us? no, we were dead: was there any ſtrength in us? no, we were dead in ſins: was there any good in us? no, we were Chriſt's enemies: was there any deſire in us? no, we were oppoſite to all goodneſs in ourſelves, there was no deſire in us to be better than we were. If God ſhould have let us alone to our own deſires, we were poſting to hell. It is the greateſt miſery in the world, next to hell itſelf, to be given up to our own deſires. A man were better to be given up to the devil than to his own deſires; he may torment him, and perhaps bring him to repentance; but to be given up to his own deſires, leads to hell. It is merely of grace; it was the grace of God the Father that gave his Son, and it was grace that the Son gave himſelf. What is grace? It is a principle from whence all good comes from God to us. As God loves us men, and not angels, it is love to men: as God's affection is beneficial to our nature, ſo it is love: as it is to perſons in miſery, ſo it is mercy: as it is free, without any worth in us procuring it, ſo it is grace. It is the ſame affection, only it differs outwardly in regard of the object. Hence we ſee that Chriſt muſt be conſidered a joint cauſe of our ſalvation with the Father. It is the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; you ſee here he became poor to make us rich. Indeed he was ſent and anointed, and ſealed, and had authority of his Father; yet notwithſtanding, his joint grace and conſent went with it: Therefore, he was a principal, (as Chryſoſtom ſays), with a principal; he differs nothing at all from the Father, but in the order of perſons: firſt the Father, and then the Son, both being jointly God, and both joint cauſes of the ſalvation of mankind. The Father choſe us to ſalvation, the Son paid the price for us, and the Holy Ghoſt applies it, and ſanctifies our natures; God the Father loved the world, and gave his Son, Chriſt loved the world and gave himſelf; "he loved me, and gave himſelf for me," ſaith St. Paul. Therefore we ſhould think of the ſweet

consent of the Trinity, in their love to mankind: so the Father loved us, that he gave the Son; so the Son loved us, that h gave himself; so the Holy Ghost loves us, that he conveys all grace to us, and dwells in us, and assures us of God's love.

We must not think of Christ as an underling in the work of salvation; he is a principal (in the work) from his Father. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the cause of all. It was the cause why he was man; it is the cause of all grace that is in us: that which is the cause of the thing caused. The grace of Christ is the cause of all in us, because it was the cause of Christ's suffering, from whence we have grace. Grace was the cause that Christ was man, and that he suffered; therefore it was the cause of grace in us. Christ was a gift, the Father gave him, and he gave himself. If thou hadst known the gift of God, (said Christ to the woman of Samaria), O, it is the greatest gift that ever was.

Therefore when we think of any one of the persons in the Trinity, we must not exclude the rest, but include all, which is a comfortable consideration: because there is a sweet union of all the three persons in the great work of salvation. As Christ saith, "I in the Father, and the Father in me;" not in essence alone, he is God, and I am God, but I am in the Father, and he in me; I consent with the Father, and the Father with me; we both agree in the work of salvation.

Therefore we should return the glory of all the good we have to God the Father, and to Christ: and, as it is in Rev. v. Worthy is the Lamb, because he hath redeemed us." When we think of the good we have by Christ; worthy is the Lamb, because he shed his blood for us. The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, he is worthy of all praise and honour; we should honour the Father, and honour the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that applies the good we have by Christ to us. When we glorify God, let us glorify Christ too, who together with the Father is to be glorified, because it was his grace to give himself, he made himself poor for us. We cannot honour the Father more than by honouring the Son; for God the Father will be seen in his Son, as the apostle saith, "In Christ we behold the glory of God;" therefore what he saith of Christ here tends to glorify the Father.

Christ not only as God, is gracious, and was willing to the work of salvation; but as the meritorious cause of the grace of

of his Father: for grace should not have been derived to us from the Father, unless first it had been seated on Christ in our nature, and in him derived to us.

The work of salvation, as it is from Christ, so it is from the grace of Christ; therefore it was free and voluntary: what is so free as grace? Therefore, Christ's abasement and poverty, it was merely voluntary. If it had not been voluntary, it would not have been meritorious and satisfactory. It was a free-will offering, it was of grace, not forced and commanded without his own consent, it was merely of grace for our good and salvation: that we might have more comfort, it was a free-will offering. He seemed as man to decline death, to shew the truth of his manhood: but when again he considered wherefore his Father sent him, "Not my will, but thine be done;" and with joy, "With desire have I desired to eat my last passover with you: and I have a baptism, and how am I pained till I be baptised with it?" However to shew the truth of his manhood, he feared death; yet, when he considered what he was sent for, it was with a resignation to the divine nature, so it was a free-will offering, and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God the Father.

Therefore when we think of Christ, let us think of nothing but grace; or, when we think of heaven, or of any blessing by Christ, all comes under the notion of grace, because all comes from mere favour. There are four descents of grace.

First, grace as it is in God and Christ, in their own breasts, the favour of God resting in his own bosom.

And then this grace and favour shewed in grace; that is, in habitual grace, in bestowing grace upon our natures, to sweeten and sanctify it, to fit it for communion with God.

And then actual grace, the movings of the spirit to every good work, to every action of grace.

And then every gift of God, every blessing as a grace, because it riseth from grace; as we say of the gifts of a great person, this is his grace or favour: so every good thing we have is a grace. It is the favour of God in Christ that sweeteneth all, let us labour to see grace in all, especially the fundamental grace, the favour of God, and of Christ, the cause of all. And let us see any grace in us as from that grace, and every good act we do, a grace from mere favour; and every blessing we have

is a grace, if our hearts be good: as the apoſtle calls the benevolence of the Macedonians, a grace—every thing that is good is a grace. "Therefore, not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory," both of thy favour, and of all that comes from it: all that we have is ſweet, becauſe it iſſueth from grace. The favour in the thing is better than the thing itſelf: as we ſay of gifts, we care not for the gift, but for the love of him who gave it: ſo the good things that we have, are not ſo ſweet as the favour of him that gave it: when we deſerve not ſo much as daily bread, but that alſo is of grace. The ſource and ſpring of all that is in us, is free grace in the breaſt of God and Chriſt.

In the controverſy between us and the papiſts, when we ſay we are juſtified by grace, we muſt not underſtand it inherent grace, whereby our natures are ſanctified, and that but in part; but it is meant in the free grace and mercy of God in Chriſt, and the free grace of Chriſt in his own breaſt. Let us take heed that we build not our juſtification and ſalvation upon a falſe title; the title is the grace of Chriſt, and of God the Father.

Now the grace we have in Chriſt in the breaſt of God is, either the good will of God, whereby he is diſpoſed to give Chriſt, and to do all good to us; there is no cauſe of that at all. Chriſt as God joins with the Father in that grace which is the grace of good will: Chriſt as mediator, is the effect of that grace. But then there is the grace of complacency, whereby God delights in us: this is beſtowed upon the creature in effectual calling: then God ſhews the grace of delighting in us, ingrafting us into Chriſt by faith; for, though before all worlds, God had a purpoſe to do good to us, yet that is concealed till we believe. As water that runs under ground, it is hid a long time till it break out ſuddenly, and then we diſcover that there was a ſtream run under ground, as Arethuſa, and other rivers; ſo it is with the favour of God from eternity, it runs under ground; till we be called we ſee not Chriſt's good will to us; but when we believe, and become one with Chriſt, God looks upon us with the love of complacency, with the ſame love wherewith he loves Chriſt, becauſe we are in Chriſt, as it is in John xvii. "I in them, and they in me." God loves the head and members with the ſame love. Chriſt as God was freely diſpoſed to chooſe men; but Chriſt as mediator continues this favour and mercy of God, when we are grafted into him,

him, to shine on us continually. It is the second that we must labour for, as a fruit of the first. Let us labour not only to know that there was an eternal love of God to some that are his; but labour, by faith in Christ, to know that he shines upon us in Christ, and all other graces within us, and all other gifts are from this first grace, therefore they have the name. Why do we call Faith, Hope, and Love, graces, but because they issue from the mercy, and favour, and love of God in Christ? and, as I said before, why do we call any benefit we have a grace? but because it comes from grace. All good things have the term grace on them, to shew they spring from whence they come.

I will not enter into arguments concerning points of popery, which is now so obnoxious to the nostrils of every man that hath but the use of ordinary reason, it is so full of folly and blasphemy. I rather speak of positive truths, to see God's grace and favour, and bless God for it, in every thing we have.

Doth all that we have in Christ, come from grace, the grace in us, and comforts, and outward things, merely from grace? then esteem them more from the spring from whence they come, than for themselves. The necessaries of this life, food, and raiment, they are but mean things in themselves; but if we consider what spring they come from, from the blood of Christ that hath purchased them, and from the grace and love of Christ, grace will add value to them; grace will make sweet that which we have; when we can say, I have this from the grace of God; as Jacob said, "These are the children that God hath given me of his bounty and grace." This is the provision, the help, and comfort that I have from the grace of Christ. The same grace that gives heaven, gives necessaries and daily bread. Let us look on every thing, and put the respect of grace upon every thing. It is grace that we meet with afflictions whereby we are corrected; God might have let us go on in the hardness of our hearts. Look upon every thing as a fruit of God's grace and favour. What is the reason that we are not more thankful for common benefits? because we look not on them as issuing from grace. Take away grace, the free favour of God, extract this quintessence; take away the love of God out of things, what are they? Let a man be rich, if he have it not from the love and mercy of God, what will all be in time but snares? Let a man be great in the world, if it be not from the grace of God, what is it? As God saith, "I will

will curse you in your blessings:" without grace we are cursed in those things that else are blessings. Take grace from Adam in Paradise, and Adam is afraid in Paradise, and hides his head. Take the favour of the king from Haman, and nothing will do him good: take the favour of the king from Absalom, and all other liberties that he had are nothing worth, when he must not go to the court: so take the grace and favour of God away that sweetens all, they will prove snares; and we shall find, by experience, that God will curse us in all our blessings. Let us labour, therefore, to have a sensible feeling of this free grace and mercy of God in Christ.

And, to add to this, the grace of Christ is a fruitful grace, it is a rich grace, as the apostle saith here, "you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became poor to make us rich by his poverty." The favour of God and Christ, it is no empty favour; it is not like the winter sun that casts a goodly countenance when it shines, but gives little comfort and heat. Many men give sweet and comfortable words, but there is nothing follows, it is but a barren favour. It is not so with God's favour, to give only a shining countenance, but no warmth: no, saith the apostle, you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, he became poor. It was grace that made him empty himself of himself, to make us full; it made him poor to make us rich; he abased himself to make us glorious. "As is the man, so is his strength;" saith the proverb, so, as is the person, such is the favour and good will we expect from him. Now Christ being so potent a person, being God and man, his grace must needs be wondrous rich, suitable to his greatness. If God will free a man, he will free him from all miseries; if he advance a man, he will advance him to heaven; if he will punish a man, he will punish him to hell, his wrath shall seize on him for ever; what he doth, he will do like a God; the grace of Christ it is a powerful rich grace.

Therefore let us examine ourselves, am I in the favour of God and of Christ? if I be, surely it is a rich favour, it tends to the best riches, he became poor to make me rich. Where is my faith, my love, my hope, my contentation, my patience, and victory over temptations and lusts? Is it a dead favour? Am I in the favour of Christ, and find no fruits of it? Certainly it is but an illusion, therefore as yet I am not in the compass of Christ's favour. Therefore I must wait in the use of means, and

and humbling myself, "he gives grace to the humble." And with a sense of our spiritual poverty, let us pray to God to shine on us in Christ, that we may find the fruit of his love enriching us with grace. Oh that my faith, and hope, and grace were more! Oh, let this evidence that I am in thy favour, by the fruits of it, that I may find those riches that thou hast procured by thy poverty. And let us not rest till we find the fruits of this grace (though not always in the comfort, yet) in the strength and ability, that we may perform in some measure what is required. Though we have not much of the comfort that we desire, yet if we have strength, we have that which is better. It is better to have grace than comfort here: God reserves that for another world. But let us always look for one of them, either sensible peace and joy, or if not that, yet strength against our corruptions, and ability to do God service in some measure; to do something above nature: holy desires, and ability, and strength, they come not from nature, but from the favour of Christ: therefore having these, I know I am in the love of Christ; these are favours that he bestows only upon his own; favours of the left hand he gives to cast-aways: but his special favours, the riches of grace, he gives only to his children.—Therefore let us labour to find somewhat wrought in our natures, that may evidence to us, that we are in this rich favour of God.

Lastly, this grace of Christ being free (for we neither desired it, nor deserved it:) why may not Manasses take hope as well as David, if he submit himself, though he were so horrible a sinner as he was? Why may not Paul a persecutor find mercy as well as Timothy, that was brought up to goodness from his youth? It is free: therefore let no man despair that hath been a wicked liver in former time. The best stand in need of grace, as St. Paul saith, "By grace I am that I am;" and the worst, if they come in and submit themselves, and take Christ for their Lord, and submit to his government, and will be ruled by his word and spirit, and not continue to live in rebellious curses, they may partake of this grace.

But again, let none presume, for though it be free grace, yet we must confess our sins, and forsake them, or else we shall find no grace: we must be poor in spirit, and sensible of our misery: for God enricheth those that are empty and poor, "The rich he sends empty away." We must sue to God for grace by the spirit of grace; and take heed that we turn not these offers of

grace

grace to occaſions of wantonneſs, and ſo divide Chriſt to take out of Chriſt what we liſt, and leave what we liſt: we muſt know that Chriſt as he is our Jeſus to ſave us, ſo he is our Lord, as he ſaith here, "The Lord Jeſus Chriſt:" we muſt ſubmit to him for the time to come, and then we ſhall find experience of his ſweet grace.

The next thing I obſerve briefly, is that "This grace muſt be known."

Saith the apoſtle here, you "know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." A man may know his riches, he may know his intereſt in Chriſt. The apoſtle uſeth it here, as an argument to perſuade them to good works: that which is uſed as an argument muſt be known before the thing can be perſuaded. A thing cannot be made light by that which is darker than itſelf: but the apoſtle here uſeth this as an argument, you "know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," ſo that theſe truths are taken for granted, "That all grace comes by the poverty of Chriſt." And then that we may know ourſelves to be intereſted in it, that Chriſt's poverty was for us. A man that is a true Chriſtian may know his ſhare and intereſt in the grace of Chriſt: or elſe how ſhould he be perſuaded by this as an argument, if he know it not? Or how ſhall he be comfortable, except he know that he hath an intereſt in Chriſt? It may be known out of the ſcriptures, as an hiſtory, that Chriſt is gracious for matter of fact: the devils know it as well as we, and Judas knew it: but he ſpeaks here of a knowledge with intereſt; you know it by experience, the ſpirit witneſſeth to your ſpirits ſo much, that Chriſt gave himſelf for you. I know the grace of Chriſt as mine, as belonging to me, as if there were no man in the world beſides: and as this knowledge is with intereſt, ſo it ſtirs up to duty. All other knowledge, but knowledge with intereſt, may ſtand with deſperation; and what good will it do to know in general that "Chriſt came to ſave ſinners," and yet go to hell for all that? It is the knowledge that applies Chriſt in particular, that ſaves a man; that knowledge that determines the general to my own perſon. Therefore we muſt labour for this. Chriſt was poor for me, "He loved me, and gave himſelf for me." The love and free grace of Chriſt, it may, and it ought to be known. "We ought to give all diligence, to make our calling and election ſure." It may be known, but it cannot be known without a great deal of diligence and ſelf-denial. This knowledge is a ſuper-added grace. It is one thing to be a ſound Chriſtian, and another

another thing to know it. A man cannot know it by reflection, but he must first be good in exercise, he must find grace working, he must give all diligence to make his calling and election sure to him. It may be sure in itself, but it cannot be sure to him without diligence: therefore those that know their estate in grace, they are fruitful, growing, careful, watchful Christians.

It is no wonder that in these secure times, if we ask many whether they know themselves to be in the state of grace upon sound grounds: they wish well, and they have many doubtings. There are many that have the seeds, and the work of grace in them, but the times are so secure that they know it not. Usually it is made known to us in the worst times, either in the time of affliction, and temptation, and trial, or after: when we have "fought the good fight," and overcome our corruptions. "To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna;" that is, he shall have a sweet sense of Christ to be manna, to be the bread of life to him, to him that conflicts and gets the victory over his corruptions. The reason why many feel not that sweet comfort from the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," it is because either they do not conflict with their base corruptions; or if they do strive, they get but a little ground of them.

And let us take heed of that cold and injurious conceit, as if it were a thing not to be known whether we belong to Christ or no. What, do we think that Christ would come in the flesh, and become poor, nay become a curse for us, and that he is now in heaven for us, and all that we should doubt whether we be in his love or no? and that we should not labour to find our portion in that love? What a wrong is this to the grace of Christ? Is not all his dealing towards us that we might be joyful in ourselves, and thankful, and fruitful to him: and how can this be without some knowledge that our state is good? How can can we live well and die comfortably without it? Therefore let us make it the main scope and aim of our endeavour. Oh the happiness of that christian that is good, and knows himself to be so! What in this world can fall very uncomfortably to such a man? Nothing in the world can take down his courage much: whereas another man that doubts of this can never be comfortable in any condition, he cannot be joyful and thankful in prosperity, he cannot be comfortable in adversity; for he knows not from what ground this comes, whether it be in love to him or no.

You see from hence likewise, that grace is no enemy to good works: neither the freedom of God's favour, being without any merit on our part; nor the knowledge and assurance of salvation: it is no enemy to diligence and to good works, nay it is the foundation of them. The apostle doth not use it here as an argument to neglect good works; no, he stirs them up by it. If any thing in the world will work upon a heart that hath any ingenuousness, it is the love and favour and grace of God: "the love of Christ constraineth," the love of Christ when known melts the heart. The knowledge of the grace of Christ, it is very effectual to stir us up, as to all duties, so especially to the duty of bounty and mercy: for experience of grace, it will make us gracious, and kind, and loving, and sweet to others. Those that have felt mercy, will be ready to shew mercy; those that have felt grace and love, they will be ready to reflect, and shew that to others that they have felt themselves. Those that are hard-hearted and barren in their lives and conversations; it is a sign that the sun of righteousness never yet shined on them. There is a power in grace, and grace known to assimilate the soul to be like unto Christ, it hath a force to stir us up to that which is good; Tit. ii. 11. 12. The apostle enforceth self-denial, a hard lesson, and holiness to God, justice to others, and sobriety to ourselves. What is the argument he useth? "The grace of God hath appeared." The grace of God hath shined as the word signifieth. He means, Christ appeared, but he saith, "The grace of God hath appeared;" when Christ appeared, grace appeared. Christ is nothing but pure grace clothed with our nature. What doth this appearing of grace teach us? "To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily, and righteously, and soberly," &c. Holily, and religiously in regard of God, justly, in regard of men, and not only justly, but bountifully; for bounty is justice. It is justice to give to the poor, "Withhold not good from the owners," they have right to what we have. Grace when it appears in any soul, it is a teacher, it teacheth to deny all that is naught, and it teacheth to practise all that is good; it teacheth to live holily and righteously in this present evil world. Many men like the text thus far, "The grace of God bringeth salvation:" O it is a sweet text! ay but what follows, what doth that grace teach thee? It teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, it doth not teach men to follow and set themselves upon the works of the devil, but to live soberly, and justly, and righteously in this present evil

evil world. It is said of the woman in the gospel, "She loved much, because much was forgiven her:" what made that blessed woman so enlarged in her affection and love to Christ? She had experience of the pardon of many sins, and having felt the love of Christ, she loved him again; and what is the reason that those that are converted from dangerous courses of life, do often prove the most fruitful christians? Because they have felt most love and mercy. Who was more zealous than the blessed apostle, St. Paul? O he found rich and abundant love! How large is he in setting forth the mercy of God: "O the height, and breadth, and depth!" Nothing contents him, no expressions, when he speaks of God's mercy: because he had been a wretched man, and found mercy. Let no man be discouraged if he have been never so sinful; if he come in. The more need he hath of mercy, the more abundant God is, as the apostle saith here, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." And those that have felt most grace, will be most wrought on, to shew the fruits of that grace in all good works, in duties towards God and men.

And if we find not our hearts wrought on, by the consideration of the grace of Christ apprehended and known to this end, "we turn the grace of God into wantonness," it is a sign of an ill condition; the scripture speaks nothing but discomfort to such, that take occasion from the free grace, and infinite, and boundless mercy of God, to be loose and careless in their lives and conversations; that think it a time of liberty, and may do what they list, (though the tongues of men say not so, nor they dare not for shame, yet their lives speak it) would men else live in swearing, and other debauched carriage, that is offensive to God and men? Do they know that there is a God, a Christ, and mercy? Do mercy and grace teach them that lesson? No, it teacheth us to deny such base lives and lusts, and to live holily, and soberly, and justly in this world. Therefore such men are atheists; either they must not believe the Scriptures, or else exclude themselves from interest in mercy; for as yet they are not in the state of grace, in whom the consideration of mercy and grace doth not work better effects than these.

The gospel has as strong encouragements, and stronger to be good and gracious, than the law. Grace enforceth strictness of life more sweetly and strongly than the law. The law saith, "We must not take the name of God in vain:" and we must be subject to our superiors, and to live chastely, &c. under a curse.

curſe. Doth not the grace of God teach this as well as the law, and from a higher ground? It teacheth the ſame thing by arguments taken from love and grace. A man periſheth by the law in ſuch ſins, but then there is a pardon offered, if men will come under the government of Chriſt, and lead new lives: but if men refuſe, there is a ſuper-added guilt; not only juſtice condemns ſuch wretches, but mercy itſelf: becauſe they refuſe mercy upon theſe terms rather than they will leave their ſinful courſes; mercy and juſtice both meet to condemn ſuch perſons. Let us take heed therefore of abuſing the mercy and love of God; for then we quite overthrow God's end in the goſpel; for why doth he convey all to us by love, and mercy, and grace, but that it may work the ſame diſpoſition again in us to him? or elſe we overturn the end of the goſpel. Let us take heed of this, as ever we will find intereſt in this grace, without which we are the miſerableſt wretches that live: it were better for us that we had never heard of Chriſt and the goſpel, than to live in ſins againſt conſcience, under the manifeſtation and publication of grace.

Now together with the grace of Chriſt, the apoſtle brings the example of Chriſt, that both may ſtir them up to the duties of mercy, and bounty, and fruitfulneſs. Indeed the grace of Chriſt makes his example more ſweet; men willingly look upon examples.

The examples of great and excellent perſons.

The example of loving and bountiful perſons.

The example of ſuch as are loving and bountiful to us in particular.

The example of ſuch as we have intereſt in, that are near and dear to us, and we to them. Theſe four things commend examples. Now is there any greater or more excellent perſon than Chriſt? Is there any fuller of love, and mercy, and grace than he, that hath made himſelf poor to make us rich? And all of us (if we be Chriſtians indeed) we have intereſt in this: our hearts and conſciences by the ſpirit of God have ſome perſuaſion of this. And then again he is dear and near unto us, he is our head and huſband, he is "all in all unto us."—Therefore the example of Chriſt joined with his grace, it is a wondrous forcible example.

Queſt.

Queſt.—How ſhall we make this example of Chriſt profitable to us?

Anſw.—Firſt of all let us look often into the grace of Chriſt, the grace and free mercy of God in giving Chriſt: conſider how he has laid forth all his riches in Chriſt, and conſider how miſerable we had been without Chriſt, even next unto devils in miſery A man is the moſt miſerable creature under heaven, if he have no intereſt in Chriſt; he is a loſt creature. Let us dwell upon the meditation and conſideration of this till we feel our hearts warmed. If one paſs through the ſunſhine, it doth not much heat; but if the ſun beat upon a thing, there will be a reflection of heat; ſo let us ſtay upon this conſideration of the infinite love and mercy of Chriſt to us wretches; and this warming the heart, it will transform us to the likeneſs of Chriſt, as the apoſtle ſaith, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all as in a mirror beholding the glory of God" (he means the glory of God's mercy in Chriſt) "We are transformed and changed from glory to glory," from one degree of grace to another. The ſerious conſideration of the love and mercy of God in Chriſt, it is a wondrous ſweet thing; and it hath a transforming power with it. And that is the reaſon why the goſpel converts men, and not the law. The law never converts a man but (together with the ſpirit) it will caſt him down: but the goſpel, which is the promulgation of grace and mercy to penitent ſinners that confeſs their ſins and forſake them, and come under a new government of grace; the publiſhing of this hath the ſpirit of grace with it to work converſion; therefore it is called the miniſtry of the ſpirit: becauſe the ſpirit goes with the doctrine of grace to change us, and make us gracious, to perſuade us that God loves us, and to ſtir us up to perform all duties in that ſweet affection of love. Therefore if we be or ever were converted, it is this way; our hearts are wrought on by the conſideration of the love and mercy of God in Chriſt; ſo that love begets love, and mercy begets a ſweetneſs in us to God again In the nature of the thing it cannot be otherwiſe, when the ſoul ſtands convinced of the ſweet mercy of God in Chriſt; and of the ſweet love of Chriſt, who being God became man, to take our nature, and ſuffer the puniſhment that was due to us; and is now in heaven appearing and making interceſſion for us; it cannot be but the ſoul will be ſtirred up to a deſire of conformity to this bleſſed Saviour. Therefore let us leave off all diſputing of election, concerning God's decree, and let us do our duty, and

depend upon God in the uſe of the means. Let us labour to ſee the love of God in Chriſt, and that will put all queſtions out of doubt (though in ſome caſes we muſt labour to know how to vindicate the truth; but when it comes to our own particular) lay other things aſide, let us do our duty, in the uſe of means, and think of the end of the goſpel, of the end of Chriſt's incarnation and death; namely, to reveal the bowels of God's mercy to ſinners, and then we ſhall find the intention of all working upon us, that God had an eternal purpoſe to ſave us.

2. Again, if we would make good uſe of the example of Chriſt, we muſt converſe with thoſe that have the ſpirit of Chriſt in them (as Chriſt is in every good Chriſtian) and ſee what lovely things the ſpirit of Chriſt diſcovers in them, that will have a transforming power likewiſe. And certainly next to the meditation of Chriſt, and the excellencies that are in him; I know no way more effectual, than holy communion with thoſe that are led by the ſpirit of Chriſt, when we ſee the ſweet fruit of it in others. It hath been a means ſanctified, to do a great deal of good to many; and thoſe that delight not in it, they never knew what the likeneſs of Chriſt meant: for thoſe that deſire to be like to Chriſt, they love the ſhining of Chriſt in any. In theſe careleſs times, all companies are alike one with another, (indeed when mens callings thruſt them upon it, they muſt be allowed to converſe with all men,) but in families and intimate ſociety, they that do not make choice of thoſe that find ſome work of grace on their hearts by the ſpirit of God, they may well doubt of their condition: for grace it will make us love the like. As we ſee creatures of the ſame kind, they love and company one with another, doves with doves, and lambs with lambs; ſo it muſt be with the children of God, or elſe we do not know what the communion of ſaints means, which indeed is a thing little underſtood in the world. Thoſe times of ſecurity are times of confuſion; affliction will make us know one another better.

3. Again, if we would make uſe of the example of Chriſt, let us put caſes ſometimes to ourſelves, what Chriſt would do, or not do in ſuch a caſe. I profeſs myſelf to be a member of Chriſt, to be one with him, and he one with me. Would Chriſt be cruel if he were on earth, would he ſwear and look ſcornfully upon others, would he undermine others, and cover all with a pretence of juſtice? O no, it is the devil's work to do ſo. If we be not members of Chriſt, woe unto us; and if we

we be, do ſuch courſes ſuit ſuch a heartleſs to Chriſt? Either let us be religious to purpoſe, or elſe diſclaim all; for it is better a great deal never to own religion, than to own it and to live graceleſs lives under the profeſſion of Chriſt.

Now to ſtir us up to expreſs Chriſt in our lives and converſations, let us conſider—The more like we are to Chriſt, the more he delights in us (for every one delights in thoſe that are like them) and what a ſweet ſtate it is for God and Chriſt to delight in us, becauſe we are like the ſon of his delight. Whom doth God delight moſt in? In his own bleſſed ſon; and who come neareſt in his delight to his ſon? Thoſe that expreſs him in their lives and converſations.

The more like we are to Chriſt, the more like we ſhall be one to another. As if there be one ſtatue, or picture, or effigy, that is ſet for the firſt ſample, the nearer the reſt come to that, the more like they are one to another: ſo I ſay, the nearer chriſtians come to the firſt patterns of goodneſs, Chriſt himſelf (who is God's maſter-piece as it were, that which he glories in) the more we come to be like one another, and love and joy one in another. What is the ſweet communion that we ſhall have one with another for ever in heaven? Is it not that the ſpirit ſhall be all and all in every one, and each ſhall look upon another, as perfect in grace and love, and ſo ſhall ſolace and delight themſelves firſt in God, and Chriſt, and then in one another, admiring and reverencing the grace and ſweetneſs one of another. This is the very joy of heaven itſelf, and it is a heaven upon earth, when we can joy and ſolace ourſelves one in another as we are good. Now the nearer we come to Chriſt who is the image of God, the more we ſhall attain this. Therefore let us labour that Chriſt may be all in all in us, that as the ſoul doth act on the body, ſo the ſpirit of Chriſt may act on us, that Chriſt may ſpeak in us, and think in us, and love in us by his ſpirit; that he may dwell in us, and joy, and hate in us by his ſpirit; that we may put off ourſelves, and our carnal affections and the ſpirit of the world; and that we may put on Chriſt, and be clothed with him, that we may ſay with St. Paul, "I live not, but Chriſt lives in me" by his ſpirit. Whence was Paul ſtirred up to that? O ſaith he, "Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me," Gal. ii. The grace of Chriſt ſtirred him up. "Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me," and by his ſpirit, he witneſſeth to my ſoul that he did ſo. Therefore the life that I live, is by the ſpirit of Chriſt, Chriſt lives in me.

But to come to the particular duty whereunto the grace and example of Chriſt ſhould ſtir us up to be like him; that is in kindneſs and mercy, and bounty, to the poor ſaints; for that is the ſcope of the apoſtle here, in this and the next chapter.—"You know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who though he was rich, he became poor," &c. Wherefore doth the apoſtle bring all this? To move them to the duty of bounty, and liberality. This duty is legal from the example of Chriſt, it is a thing that hath much equity in it; and it is enough to a chriſtian heart that hath the love of God, to put him in mind of the grace of God to him, you need not beat upon him, or preſs him further than this, "You know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;" remember you are a chriſtian, you have felt the experience of God's love in Chriſt: every man will judge of the equity, that we ſhould therefore be gracious, and kind, and loving to others, (in imitation of Chriſt) becauſe he hath been ſo to us. Wherein ſtands the equity?

Firſt, it may appear in this, if we conſider in how near a relation, thoſe that need our help, are to us, and likewiſe to Chriſt.

1. What is their relation to us? Not only that they are our fleſh (for ſo are all men) but they are heirs of the ſame ſalvation, bought with the death of the ſame Chriſt, ſuch as Chriſt feeds with his own body and blood, ſuch as he clothes with his own righteouſneſs, they are fellow members with us, fellow heirs of heaven, and members of Chriſt, ſuch as he died for to redeem with the price of his own blood: there is an undeniable equity if we conſider their condition, their relation to Chriſt, and to us.

2. Again, there is a marvellous binding equity, to ſee the grace of God to us in particular. Chriſt became poor to make us rich here, and in glory hereafter; and ſhall not I out of my riches give ſomewhat to the poor? Is it not equal? Chriſt from heaven came in my nature and fleſh to viſit me; as it is in the ſong of Zachary, "The day ſpring from on high hath viſited us," and ſhall not I viſit Chriſt in his members? He came from heaven to earth to take notice of my wants and miſeries, to do and ſuffer that which I ſhould have done and ſuffered: he feeds me with his body and blood, that is, with his ſatisfaction to divine juſtice by his death; and ſhall not I feed his poor members? Chriſt clothes me with his righteouſneſs, and ſhall not I clothe

clothe Chriſt in his poor members? In the conſideration of theſe things, the ſpirit of God will be effectual, to ſtir us up to this marvellous neglected duty, of kindneſs and mercy to thoſe that ſtand in need.

And becauſe Chriſt is our pattern herein, let us labour to imitate Chriſt in the manner of relieving and ſhewing kindneſs, and communicating to others, that we may do it as Chriſt hath done.

How is that?

Firſt, Chriſt prevented us, when we never deſired him; ſo we ſhould prevent others Sometimes the modeſty of thoſe that want, is ſuch, that they will not lay open their wants; we ſhould ſee it, and prevent it: he gives too late (oft times) that gives to a man that aſks him. Therefore herein let us imitate Chriſt, to conſider of the miſeries of others: he looked on and conſidered the miſeries of mankind, and it drew him from heaven to the virgin's womb, from thence to the croſs, to the grave, even as low as hell, in his preventing love and mercy.—Therefore when we ſee any need (eſpecially if there be any worth in them of any kind) let us not ſtay till it be wreſted from us by intreaty (for it is dearly bought oft times that comes that way,) but prevent them in mercy, as Chriſt hath done to us.

Secondly, what Chriſt did for us, he did marvellous chearfully and readily; O what a deſire he had to eat his laſt paſſover, a little before he was crucified! "With deſire have I deſired to eat this paſſover with you:" he was chearful in it, he had a great deſire to do us good; and as he ſaith, John iv. when his diſciples put him in mind of eating, when he had not eat for a long time before, ſaith he, "It is meat and drink to me to do the will of my Father:" ſo whatſoever we do to others, we ſhould do it cheerfully and readily, as he did.

Again, whatſoever Chriſt did for us, he did it out of love, and grace, and mercy, he did it inwardly from his very bowels; ſo when we do any thing for others, we ſhould not only do the deed, but do it from an inward principle of love and mercy. Therefore, the Scripture phraſe is, pour out thy bowels, and ſaith St. John, if a man ſee his brother in need, and pretend he loves God, and yet relieves him not, how is there bowels in ſuch a man? and ſo in Micah vi. "He hath ſhewed thee, O

man, what is good, to love mercy; not only to be merciful, to do works of mercy, but to love it, to what we do out of love and affection; and pour out thy heart to thy flesh, as it is in Isaiah, to give the heart and affection, when we do any thing, or else we may give with the hand, and deny with the heart. A man may give a thing so untowardly, that one may see it comes against his heart and will. Therefore let us labour to do what we do with our whole man, especially from our heart and affection, and bowels. It is said of Christ in the gospel, when he saw the people in misery, his bowels yearned within him. The works of grace and mercy in Christ, they came from his bowels first. Let us work our hearts to pity, and love, and mercy first, that it may come from the soul as well as from the outward man.

Again, Christ gave that which was his own, his own body, his own life for his sheep, and his own endeavour; whatsoever he gave was his own; so if we will be kind to others, we must do it of our own; we must not do good with that which we have got from others by unjust means; for the sacrifice of the wicked, in this kind, is an abomination to the Lord. Let us have an interest in what we give: Christ gave his own life, and God gave his own Son for us.

And as Christ gave his own self, so he gave himself in life and death for us: he did not reserve all for his death: but for us he was born, for us he lived, for us he died; he deferred not all till his death; Christ did us wondrous good by his death, and men may do us much good when they die. But let us endeavour to be like Christ in both, to do good when we live, and good when we die likewise. The common speech is, the gifts of dying men are dying, dead gifts; it is a speech tending to the disparagement of gifts in that kind, because they are not so acceptable as the gifts of living men in many respects: notwithstanding let not men be discouraged from doing good even when they die. Indeed it is most comfortable to do it while they live: because,

1. It is an evidence then that they have a spirit of faith, to depend upon the promise of God. It is no exercise of faith, to give when a man can keep it no longer.

2. Again, he that doth good while he liveth, he hath the prayers of others, he is under the blessing of the poor, and that

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is a ſweet thing. Suppoſe the poor be barbarous baſe people, that they bleſs not a man with their words, yet their ſouls bleſs him. Now thoſe that defer all till they die, they want this comfort, they are not under the bleſſing of the poor. The rule of our religion is, that we have no good by the prayers of others: I will not diſcuſs that point now; but undoubtedly it is a ſweet comfort that we have of what we do while we live, by the bleſſing and prayers of the poor, to whom we do good.

3. Then again, in civil reſpects, it is our own, and we are ſure it is well beſtowed. When we are dead, the property is gone from us, it comes into the poſſeſſion of another man, and we know not how he will diſpoſe of it. Perhaps he that needs thy help, may die before you, or you may die, or you may not have the ſame mind; therefore, while you have a heart, and opportunity to do good, forget not to do it preſently. We have need to be urged in theſe cold dead times, to labour that the grace of Chriſt may be effectual in our hearts, to do all the good we can in our lifetime, as Chriſt did.

And let us labour to do it as he did, conſtantly, that we may "never be weary of well doing. In the morning ſow thy ſeed, and in the evening let not thy hand reſt." It is comfort enough that it is called ſeed. Who grieves to caſt his ſeed into the ground? he knows he ſhall have a plentiful return; ſo all that we give it is ſeed, we ſee it not for the preſent; no more we do the ſeed that is ſown: but "caſt thy bread upon the waters, and after many days thou ſhalt find it." Though we ſee not this ſeed for the preſent, yet we ſhall have a plentiful harveſt. Only labour to do it with prudence: for men do not ſow upon the ſtones, nor upon the fallow ground, they do not ſcatter their ſeed in every place. Sowing is a regular thing; men caſt ſeed into ground that is prepared; therefore there muſt be ſpiritual diſcretion, the wiſdom of a ſteward in this kind, Pſal. cxii. "The juſt man doth all things with wiſdom and diſcretion."

Queſt.—But muſt we not be liberal, and kind, and bountiful to all?

Anſw.—Yes, in caſe of neceſſity, then we are to look to man's nature, becauſe he is partaker of our nature, and he is ſuch an one as may be a member of Chriſt, and one for whom Chriſt died, for ought we know; he now bears the image of Chriſt, and he may come to the obedience of Chriſt, and our kindneſs may be

effectual to bring him to goodneſs: therefore as we, if we be in need, do not ſtand upon it, but receive kindneſs from wicked men; ſo when wicked men are in need, we muſt not ſtand upon it, but give to wicked men; we muſt do as we would be done by, in ſuch caſes, in neceſſity.

But our kindneſs muſt be moſt to thoſe that are neareſt to God, to thoſe of the family and houſhold of faith, to thoſe that God loves moſt we muſt be moſt kind; to whom God has diſpenſed the greateſt things, we ſhould not deny the leſs.

Indeed it is a hard matter to give wiſely in theſe times, and not to abuſe the ſweet affection and grace of pity, (it is an affection in all, but it is a grace in them that are good), becauſe there are ſo many wretched people, who live without God, without church, without commonwealth, without marriage, without baptiſm, like beaſts. If any thing be an object of pity, certainly this is, that there are ſo many that carry God's image on them, that are God's creatures, and for ought we know, thoſe that Chriſt died for, that they ſhould be ſuffered to live irregular, debauched, and baſe lives, ſcandalous to the church and ſtate. And, without queſtion, if things be not better looked unto, theſe will be inſtruments of much miſchief by God's juſt judgment; becauſe there be good laws that are not executed. The beſt mercy to ſuch, is to ſee them ſet to work, and to give them correction. But then, for ſuch as are beginning the world, that are poor, and cannot ſet up, and thoſe that have the church of God in their families, that are ready to fall, and a little relief would keep them, that they fall not into inordinate courſes, it is mercy to ſet them up and maintain them; and alſo by upholding thoſe that are in the miniſtry. There are many ways in the church and ſtate: a wiſe man can never want objects of mercy and charity, as Chriſt ſaith, "the poor you ſhall have always with you:" but (as I ſaid) we muſt labour for a ſpirit of wiſdom, to do good as we ſhould, and not to feed drones inſtead of bees.

The ſpirit of God is frequent in preſſing this point: but this argument in the text, it may melt any man's heart, and take away all objections, "the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

If a man object, he that I ſhould give to is an unworthy perſon. Do but think how worthy we were of the favour of Chriſt to us. And then again conſider if there be any goodneſs in them, we give it to Chriſt in them; as Salvianus ſaith well,

Chriſt

Chriſt doth hide himſelf under the perſon of the poor; the poor man reacheth out his hand indeed, but Chriſt receives that which we give, and they are Chriſt's exchangers: for they take from us, and Chriſt rewards us with grace, and increaſe of our ſubſtance here, and with glory hereafter: they receive it inſtead of Chriſt, and Chriſt begs it in the perſon of the poor, in all jointly, and in every one particularly. Think of the grace of Chriſt to us, and then think Chriſt comes to me in the perſon of this, or that poor man, and it will ſtir us up to this duty.

Object.—But ſome will ſay, if Chriſt were on earth himſelf, I ſhould be ready to do it to him.

Certainly thou wouldſt not: you know the place, Mat. xxv. "In as much as you have not relieved theſe, you have denied it to me," ſaith Chriſt. Let us not deceive ourſelves; for even as we would do to Chriſt if he were on earth, we will do to his poor members, for he hath made them his receivers.

Object.—But I ſhall want myſelf; I have a family, and children.

Anſ.—It is the beſt way to provide for thy children, Pſal. cxii. God provides for the poſterity of the righteous bounteous man. A man is not the poorer for diſcreet mercy. It is ſeed, as I ſaid before; a poor man labours to have his ſeed ſown, becauſe it returns plentifully. Let us be ſober, and abate of our ſuperfluous expences; pride is an expender, and ſuperfluous luſts; let us cut off from them, that we may have ſomewhat for ſeed; let us labour in an honeſt calling, that we may have ſomewhat to give. O, it is a bleſſed thing to give! it is a thing that muſt be gotten by uſe, our ſouls muſt be exerciſed to it; and when we have gotten it, learn an art of giving, and exerciſe faith it. And when we come to die, it will make us die wondrous ſweetly; for, when a man hath depended by faith and truſt upon God's promiſe, that he that gives to the poor lends to the Lord, and other like promiſes; I have exerciſed liberality, and now I come to give up my ſoul to God; I believe that God will make good the promiſe of life everlaſting. I have believed his other promiſes before; and though I have caſt my ſeed into the ground, that I ſaw it not, yet I have found that God hath bleſſed me the better in a way that I know not; and now depend upon the ſame gracious God, in the promiſe of life everlaſting. We ſhould labour to do this, that we may die with comfort. What is it that troubles many when they come to die?

die? O they have not wrought our their ſalvation with fear and trembling, they have neglected this duty, and that duty, they have been careleſs in the works of mercy, &c. The time will come that that which we have given will comfort us more than that which we have; we ſhall always have that which we give; for that goes into bank, many prayers are made for us; we have the comfort of it here; and when we die, what we leave, we know not what becomes of it.

Therefore let us labour to be prudently large and bountiful, as we deſire to die with comfort, as we would make it good that we know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt with intereſt in it; and as we would make it good to our ſouls, that the example of Chriſt is a thing that hath any efficacy with us, or elſe we ſhew that we have no intereſt in the grace of Chriſt, and then how miſerable are we? We ſhall wiſh ere long that we had part in this grace and love of Chriſt, that he would ſpeak comfortably to us at the latter day, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom." Our life is ſhort and uncertain; as we ſhall deſire it then, ſo labour to be aſſured of it now; and let us be ſtirred up from this "grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, though he was rich, became poor for our ſakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

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RICH POVERTY;

OR,

POOR MAN's RICHES.

ZEPH. iii. 12.

"*I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people,*
"*and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.*"

BEFORE the captivity in Babylon, God sent prophets to his people, as Jeremiah, and among the rest Zephaniah, who lived in the time of Josias, to forewarn and forearm them against worse times. And as the contents of all other prophesies are for the most part these three: so of this. They are either such expressions and prophecies as set forth the sins of the people; or, secondly, the judgments of God; or, thirdly, comfort to the remnant, to God's people; so these are the parts of this prophecy. A laying open of the sins of the time, under so good a prince as Josias was; and likewise the judgments of God denounced; and then in this third chapter especially, here is comfort set down to the good people who then lived: the comfort begins at the ninth verse.

This particular verse is a branch of the comfort, that however God dealt with the world, he would be sure to take care of his own. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." The whole scripture is for consolation and comfort; when God pulls down, it is that he may build up; when he purgeth, it is that he may cure and heal; he is the father of comfort, whatsoever he doth, it is for comfort: therefore he hath a special care in his prophets and ministers, and ambassadors, that those

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that belong to him may be raiſed up with comfort, and not be overmuch dejected and caſt down. But to come to the words,

I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee, &c.

In the words are theſe three general heads:

Firſt, God's dealing with his poor church when he comes to viſit the world, "I will leave in the midſt of thee."

Secondly, their condition and diſpoſition, they are "an afflicted and poor people."

Thirdly, their practice and carriage towards God, "they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord."

From the firſt, God's dealing with his people in the worſt of times; we may obſerve, firſt, that

There is a difference of the people,

both in regard of providence in this world, and in regard of that love that tends to the world to come: for God hath a more ſpecial care (as we ſhall ſee afterwards) of ſome, than he hath of others, and he loves ſome to eternal life, and not others. "I will leave in the midſt of thee, an afflicted and poor people," refuſing others. God will leave ſome, he will purge away others; as he ſaith in the verſe before, "I will take away out of the midſt of thee, them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou ſhalt no more be haughty becauſe of my holy mountain:" he will take them away; but I will leave in the midſt of thee, &c. there is a difference. All are not alike, (as the proverb is), as white lines upon a white ſtone, that we cannot ſee a difference. It is not alike with all men: for we ſee a difference in this world: but not much here, becauſe God's government is veiled, it will appear at the laſt day; and whatſoever appears at the laſt day, it had a ground before. There is a difference in regard of grace and inward qualification, and in regard of the care of God. Even as there is a difference in the creatures: there are precious ſtones and common ſtones: and in plants, there be fruitful trees and barren trees: and as there is a difference likewiſe in the living creatures, ſo among men there is a difference.

The

The next thing is, that

God will have ſome in the worſt times.

He will have ſome in all times that are his, a remnant, as he ſaith here, "The remnant of Iſrael ſhall do no iniquity;" and as in the text, "I will leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people," &c. God will have always ſome that are his in the world.

For, it is an article of our faith, "We believe the holy catholic church;" there muſt not be an article of faith, and no object to believe. If there be faith to believe a thing, there muſt be ſomewhat to be believed. If I believe that at all times there ſhall be an holy catholic church, there muſt be ſuch a church in the world, that is the object of my belief, or elſe there were no foundation for that article of faith; therefore there muſt always be a church to the end of the world; ſometimes more, ſometimes fewer, even as the diſcovery of Chriſt is. From whence comes the abundance of the ſpirit? the ſpirit follows the manifeſtation of the knowledge of Chriſt, who is the head of the church; then is the church moſt glorious, when the riches of Chriſt are more gloriously diſcovered. Thoſe times wherein there is moſt diſcovery of Chriſt, and the mercy and love of God in him, there are more elect of God in thoſe times than in others. There will be always a church in the world, that is the object of our belief. What is the meaning of it? I believe that in all times, to the end of the world, there will be a company of people ſpread over the world, gathered out of the reſt of mankind, whom Chriſt hath knit to himſelf by faith, and themſelves together in a holy ſpirit of love; of which company I believe myſelf to be one. Therefore there muſt be ſuch a company, or elſe there would be faith without an object of faith, which were a great abſurdity in divinity and reaſon too.

Then again, the world ſhould not ſtand, were it not for a company in the world that are his: for, what are others? A company of ſwearers and blaſphemers, prophane perſons, belly-gods, ambitious bubbles, that care for nothing but the vanities of the world; what glory hath God by them? what tribute do they give to God? what credit to religion? they are the ſhame of the times, they are ſuch as pull down God's vengeance on the times and places they live in. Such is the evil diſpoſition, and poiſonous nature of men (if they have not the ſpirit of God) that

that God would not endure the world to ſtand a moment, unleſs there were ſome to with-hold his wrath, to be objects of his love, and to ſtay his hand; and when they ſhall be all gathered, there ſhall be an end of this wretched and ſinful world: ſome there muſt be while the world endures, and for their ſakes God continues the world. Thoſe that keep God's wrath from the world, are thoſe that are his, and till all thoſe be gathered the world ſhall ſtand. There ſhall always be ſome.

It is a point not altogether fruitleſs, it yields ſome comfort to know, that when we are taken hence, others ſhall ſtand up when we are gone, the church ſhall not die with us. Is not that a comfort when a chriſtian yields his ſoul to God, to think, yet God will have a achurch and people, if not among us, yet in ſome other part of the world, he will have ſome that will glorify him in this world, that ſhall adorn and beautify religion, and ſhall for ever be glorified with him in heaven, till he hath made an end of theſe ſinful days. It is ſome comfort that goodneſs ſhall live after us, that the goſpel ſhall continue after us. There ſhall be a poſterity to the end of the world, that ſhall ſtand for the truth and cauſe of God. The world was not, nor ever ſhall be ſo bad, but God hath had, and will have a party in the world that ſhall ſtand for him, and he for them. Now the children of God, as they know God hath a purpoſe to glorify them world without end; ſo they have a deſire that God may be glorified world without end, and from this deſire comes joy, when they think that there will be a people on earth to glorify God ſtill, when they are taken hence: for it is a diſpoſition wrought from God's peculiar love, to wiſh that God may ever have his praiſe here in the world to come: therefore it is a comfort to them to think that God will always have a church.

But theſe are but a few, called by Iſaiah a remnant, a remnant according to election, as it is Rom. xi. a handful in compariſon of the world, yet they are a world in reſpect of themſelves; for they are a world taken out of the world; but compared with the reſt of mankind, they are but as a "few grapes after the vintage, as the gleanings after the harveſt, one of a city, and two of a tribe." The prophets every one of them have ſpecial phraſes, to ſet out the fewneſs of thoſe that God hath a ſpecial care of, he calls them, in the next verſe, "the remnant of Iſrael." God will have ſome continually; but thoſe are but a few that are his, his flock is but a little flock.

It

It is a point not mainly aimed at here; but it is very uſeful.

Uſe.—Is there but a few, but a remnant in all times? Am I one of thoſe? What have I to evidence that I am of that little flock that is Chriſt's? What have I in me to evidence that God hath ſet his ſtamp upon me to be his? that I ſhall not go the broad way to deſtruction? this ſhould force ſuch queſtions to our ſouls. When we hear of the few that ſhall be ſaved, we ſhould ſtrive to make that uſe which Chriſt makes of that curious queſtion of the fewneſs of them that ſhould be ſaved. O, ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate! Stand not on many or few, make this uſe of it: ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: take up, and practiſe the duties of religion, that are contrary to the corruption of nature, and contrary to the times, avoid the ſins and courſes of the times, and then we ſhall know and evidence to ourſelves that we are of that few number. Somewhat muſt be done, to ſhew that we are not of thoſe that go the broad way. We hear that there are few that go the other way: and indeed it will make a man look about him, the very conſideration that there are but few that ſhall be ſaved.

And it will make a man wondrous thankful. "Who am I, and what is my father's houſe?" What is there in me? What could God ſee in me to ſingle me out of the reſt, out of a great number that go the broad way to deſtruction, to ſet his love upon me? It will enflame the heart with thankfulneſs to God; it will not make a man proud to deſpiſe others, that is phariſaical; but it will enflame the heart to be thankful in a peculiar manner to God. And to ſingle out God in a peculiar manner to be our God, as he hath ſingled out us to be his: for he always works ſomething in us like to what he works for us. Thoſe that God hath ſingled out to be his, he will give them grace to ſingle out him again. God ſhall be my God, religion ſhall be my care, and that which God reſpects ſhall be that which I will reſpect: ſince God ſo reſpects me, ſhall I not love and reſpect all that God reſpects? And ſhall I not grieve when any thing goes amiſs that God hath a care of? Certainly it will work this diſpoſition, when we come to perceive, by grounded evidence, that we are of that ſmall company, of that remnant here ſpoken of, that God will leave always to truſt in his name.

In the next place, though they be few, yet

God hath a ſpecial care of them.

Why?

Why? there is good reaſon: for they are his in a peculiar manner. A governor of a houſe, he cares for all his cattle, but he cares for his children more A man hath ſome care for all the lumber and traſh in his houſe, he ſees them uſeful at ſometime or other; but he cares more for his jewels; if fire come, he will be ſure to carry away his jewels, whatſoever become of the lumber. God's children are his, after a peculiar manner, therefore, he hath an anſwerable peculiar care of them at all times. And indeed when they are once his. as he makes them have a peculiar care of him, ſo he looks upon them as ſuch as he hath wrought upon to be good, and to witneſs for him, that have a care to ſtand for him and his honour, to own him and the cauſe of religion, he will have a care of them. Not that they have this of themſelves to win his love; but he works in them a care to witneſs for him; he works in them a care to ſtand for him and his glory in all times, and therefore he will be ſure to ſtand for them in the worſt times. He will not be beholden to any man; what we have, we have it from him, and then he crowns his own graces after; he will have a ſpecial care of thoſe that are his.

This might be inſtanced from the beginning of the world; from the infancy of the church to the preſent time. When he would conſume the old world, Noah muſt come into the ark. And Lot muſt come forth of Sodom when it was to be deſtroyed, the angel could do nothing elſe. So he had a care of Jeremiah and Baruch, he gave them their lives for a prey. He will have a care of his own in the worſt times, for they are ſealed he hath ſet his ſeal upon them. Thoſe things that are ſealed, we have a ſpecial care of: now, in Revel. vii. there are a number that are ſealed: ſealed inwardly by the ſpirit of God, they are marked out for God: they are a marked ſealed number, all thoſe that God will have a ſpecial care of. As in Ezek. ix. Thoſe that were marked in the forehead, they were looked unto, and cared for before the deſtruction came. So, in Malachi iii. God had jewels that he ſaith he would gather. When he brings a general deſtruction, he will be ſure to gather his jewels, his firſt care is of them, a book of remembrance was written for them, he hath a book of providence to write their names in, he hath their limbs, all the parts of them written: not a hair of them can miſcarry, their tears, their ſteps, their days are numbered: "My times are in thy hand," ſaith David: all things are numbered exactly of thoſe that belong to God; he hath

hath a care of them, and all theirs to a hair, as our Saviour Chriſt ſaith; they ſhall not loſe ſo much as a hair of their heads. God hath an exact care of his remnant at all times.

But you will ſay, ſometimes it falls out otherwiſe. Indeed ſo it doth; for ſometimes God's children are taken away in common judgments, for too much correſpondence with the ſins of the times, therefore they are wrapped in the deſtruction of the times: but yet there is a main difference between them. Jonathan and Saul died by the ſword both of them; Joſias and others died in the field; but there is a main difference. Jonathan was a good man; Saul, for ought the Scripture ſaith of him, we have no ground to judge charitably of him, but leave him to his judge. But ſure it is in general, though the ſame things befal good and bad outwardly, yet there is a difference between Lazarus and Dives, when they die. Dives goes to his place, Lazarus goes to heaven. But, for the moſt part, this is true, in regard of the body of the church, though in ſome few members, God hath hidden ways to bring them to heaven and happineſs; but for the body of his church, and dear children, he will give them their lives for a prey; he will have a ſpecial care of them in the world, as it is in the pſalm, "the heathen ſhall ſay, God hath done great things for them:" men that have no religion, ſhall ſay, certainly God doth great things for theſe men; though he ſuffer them to be carried captive, and to be in affliction: yet in that very affliction, ſhall be the glory of the church, in that very bondage and abaſement. Was the church ever more glorious than in Babylon, when Daniel was there, and the three young men were put into the fire? The glory of the church is oftentimes in outward abaſement: the world ſhall ſee that God hath a ſpecial care of them more than of others. God ſo magnifies himſelf, and is ſo marvellous to his church and children to do good to them ſometimes, to the envy of their enemies, and the admiration of all the world that take notice of them; as at the return from the captivity, and the like ſhall be at the converſion of the Jews.

The uſe of it may be to comfort us againſt evil times, againſt the time to come; "Let us caſt our care upon God, he will care for us;" he will be with us, and ſtand by us: he will never forſake us in the worſt times. Nay, his faſhion is to deal with his children, as becometh his infinite wiſdom, that they ſhall find moſt comfort and ſweeteſt communication with him in the hardeſt times. Therefore let us fear nothing that ſhall be-

ſal us with ſlaviſh fear, let us fear nothing whatſoever in this world, as long as we are in covenant with God, come what will. It is a great honour to God to truſt him with all for the time to come: let us do our duty, and not be afraid of this or that, as long as we have God in covenant with us, who is all-ſufficient What ſhould we be afraid of? "Can a mother forget her child, (ſaith the prophet), if ſhe ſhould, yet will I not forget thee, thou art written on the palms of my hands." Thoſe things that are in the palms of our hands, we have ever in our eye. God hath us in his eye he ſets his children before him always, how can he forget them? How can Chriſt forget his church? He carries them in his breaſt, as the high prieſt had the names of the twelve tribes on his breaſt in twelve precious ſtones, when he went into the holy of holies. Chriſt carries our names in his heart. how can he forget us then? Let kingdoms daſh one againſt another, and let the world tumble upon heaps; let there be what confuſion of ſtates there will, God certainly will have a care of his jewels. "I will leave (in ſpite of all the world) in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people," &c.

Queſt.—You will ſay, when is this performed?

In that day, (ſaith he in the verſe before my text).—You muſt know it is the manner of the Scripture, when it ſaith, "in that day," to take it indefinitely, not to fix it to a certain day; though there is a certain day when there ſhall be an accompliſhment of all prophecies, and a performance of all promiſes, that is the laſt day. In the mean time, there is a gradual performance of promiſes, and the accompliſhment of them is in ſeveral knots and points of time, ſo much as ſhall give content to God's children, yet always leading to a further and further performance. As, for example, God ſhewed mercy to theſe Iſraelites, when they were in captivity, he brought them home again; they were a poor and afflicted people, and were much bettered by their abaſement; there was a degree of performance then. And then there was a degree of performance in Chriſt's time, when he joined the Gentiles to them, and both made one church. There will be a more glorious performance at the converſion of the Jews, when God ſhall make his people truſt in the name of the Lord, and the Gentiles ſhall come in and join with them, and they with the Gentiles. But that which follows in the verſe after, "The remnant ſhall do no iniquity,

nor

nor ſpeak lies, a deceitful tongue ſhall not be found in their mouth." Theſe things ſhall have their time, when his people ſhall be more thoroughly purged than ever they were: and certainly theſe glorious portions of ſcripture cannot have performance, but in ſuch days as are to come. But the accompliſhment of all ſhall be at the day of judgment. Indeed, in the mean time, there is a comfortable performance, leaving us in expectation of further and further ſtill: becauſe while we live here, we are in a life of hope and expectation, and always we are under ſomewhat unperformed.

I come now to the ſtate and condition of theſe people:

An afflicted and poor people.

This is their ſtate and condition, wherein is implied alſo their diſpoſition: their ſtate is, they are an afflicted and poor people; ſo it is anſwerable to the original, an afflicted and impoveriſhed people, a weakened people. However God hath a ſpecial care of his church in this world; yet it is with exception of ſome croſſes and afflictions. You ſhall have an hundred fold, ſaith Chriſt, in this life; but with tribulations and afflictions; that muſt come in. But yet notwithſtanding here is a bleſſing in this: for though he leaves them an afflicted and poor people, yet he leaves them a people; and though they be a people afflicted and poor, yet they are a people that are rich in God; they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord, of which I ſhall ſpeak afterwards. In that he calls them an afflicted and poor people, hence we ſee in the firſt place, that,

The ſtate of God's church and children in this world (for the moſt part) is to be afflicted and poor in their outward condition.

I ſay, for the moſt part; we muſt not make it a general rule: it is a point rather to comfort us when it is ſo, than that it is always ſo with the church. For howſoever they are always in ſome reſpects afflicted, they have always ſomething to abaſe them, yet the times of the church are ſometimes more glorious in the eyes of the world; they have the upper hand of the world ſometimes: and ſometimes again, the children of God they walk in the abundance of the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, and increaſe and multiply, as it is in Acts ix. when Saul was converted to be Paul, "The church increaſed and grew, and went on in the fear of the Lord, and the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt." There are good days and times for the church ſome-

times: but for the moſt part in this world, God's church and children are under ſome cloud. I will not enter into the explanation of it, but only touch it in a word or two.

1. God will have it ſo: becauſe it is fit the body ſhould be conformable to the head. You know our bleſſed Saviour, when he wrought our ſalvation, he wrought it in a ſtate of abaſement: and we, in working out our ſalvation, in going to that ſalvation that he hath wrought for us; we muſt go to it, for the moſt part, in a ſtate of abaſement in one kind or other: for we are choſen to be conformable to our head, and we are as well choſen to our portion in afflictions, as to grace and glory. God hath ſet us apart to bear ſuch a ſhare and portion of troubles in this world, to ſuffer, as well as to do. "From my youth up (ſaith the church) they have afflicted me; the ploughers have ploughed upon my back, and made long furrows:" that is, from the infancy of the church, in all the growth of it, this hath been the ſtate of the church, for the moſt part, to be afflicted and poor.

2. And, indeed, if we look to ourſelves, by reaſon of the remainder of our corruption, it is needful it ſhould be ſo. God in wiſdom ſees it fit it ſhould be ſo, that we ſhould be afflicted and poor, becauſe he ſees that we can hardly digeſt any flouriſhing condition in this world. It is as ſtrong waters to a weak ſtomach; although ſtrong waters intoxicate them not to make them drunk, yet they weaken the brain: ſo, although a good condition in the world doth not altogether beſot men, yet it weakens them, without a great meaſure of faith, and makes them forget God, and the condition of worldly things, how empty and vain they are, and forget themſelves, and their own mortality, and forget others, what reſpect is due to them: as if the world were made only for them to toſs and tumble in at their pleaſure, to have all at their will, as if other men were ſcarce men to them. You ſee when men are truſted with great matters, they deal with other men as if they were not men, as if all were made for their pleaſure. This is the nature of man in great eminency, it ſets up its own deſire for a god, as if all other were beaſts, and baſe, and nothing. It is a pitiful thing to conſider what our nature is in this kind. Nay, take the beſt: Hezekiah, in his proſperity, he would needs ſhew his treaſures to the king of Babylon, (a fair booty for him), you know what it coſt him afterwards. Naturally we are prone to outward carnal excellency too much, God knows it well enough. David would

be

be numbering the people, that he might be conceited of what a goodly number he had to oppoſe to his enemies: God puniſhed him you ſee in that kind, he took away that people in whom he had his confidence. God deals thus with his children in this world, becauſe he ſees a diſpoſition in them that cannot digeſt, and manage, and overcome proſperity; they cannot command it as they ſhould do, but are ſlaves to their own luſts, though they have a good meaſure of grace. We are prone to ſurfeit of the things of this life; and God is forced, as it is in Pſal. cxix. "of very faithfulneſs thou haſt corrected me," God of very faithfulneſs, becauſe he will be true to our ſouls and ſave them, is forced to diet us, and keep us ſhort of the things of this life: to take away matter of pride and matter of conceitedneſs in carnal excellencies, to make us know ourſelves and him, and the world what it is, the vanity of the world, and worldly things. You ſee, then, God hath ſome cauſe to do it.

Uſe.—And we may juſtify God when he any way abaſeth us in the world; he knows what he hath to do with us, let us leave that to him, ſo he ſave our ſouls, and ſanctify them, and delight in us to heaven and happineſs: if his pleaſure be to diet us in this world, in regard of riches, and greatneſs, that he do not anſwer our deſires, but keep us under hatches; let us leave it to his will, he knows what to do with us; as the phyſician knows better what concerns the ſick than the ſick doth. Therefore let us take in good part the wiſe diſpenſations of God.

But why doth he join afflicted and poor together? Becauſe poverty is affliction, and becauſe affliction goes with poverty; poverty brings affliction, it brings abaſement with it, and it is an affliction itſelf. For the poor man is trod on at all hands, men go over the hedge where it is loweſt, it is an affliction and it goes with affliction; therefore the apoſtle St. Paul, Philip. iv. he joins them together, "I have learned to want and to be abaſed:" Why? Becauſe a man that is in want in the world, is uſually abaſed; every man ſcorns him that is in want; they look haughty and high over a man that hath any uſe of them, ſo that affliction and poverty uſually go together.

Thoſe that God doth abaſe in this kind, let them conſider, that it is no otherwiſe with them than it hath been with God's people before; and let them labour for true riches, taking advantage from their outward eſtate to be rich in a better way.

In the next place we may obſerve hence, that

" God ſanctifies outward affliction and poverty, to help inward poverty of ſpirit."

Poverty in outward condition helps poverty in the inward diſpoſition. In their ſtate and condition is implied their diſpoſition; poor for condition, and likewiſe in inward diſpoſition; for that is implied here. The prophet doth not mean he will leave poor people that ſhall only be poor; for we ſee a world of poor and proud. A man as he goes along in the ſtreets, ſhall hear a company of poor that are the greateſt rebels in the world againſt God, that blaſpheme, and ſwear, that rail againſt magiſtrates and governors, they are the moſt unbroken people in the world: the pooreſt and beggarlieſt, the refuſe of mankind; as they are in condition, ſo they are in diſpoſition. The Scripture ſpeaks here of God's poor, not of the devil's poor, who are poor every way, outwardly and inwardly, and have their poverty as a juſt puniſhment of their wicked lives, and continue in that wicked life, having it not ſanctified to them to make them deſire better riches. Doth God eſteem ſuch poor? No; but ſuch poor, and afflicted, as together with the meanneſs of their outward condition, have it ſanctified to them; ſo as they grow to be low and poor in their own eſteem of themſelves, they grow to inward poverty of ſpirit, and ſo ſeek to God, for better riches: " to be rich in faith," as the Scripture ſpeaks, eſpecially ſuch and only ſuch are here meant. So then mark the point here, that,

" God ſanctifies affliction and poverty for the inward good of the ſouls of his children."

This is the reaſon of it, outward poverty and affliction takes away the fuel that feeds pride, that is an oppoſite to ſpiritual poverty, and humility, and ſight of our wants. That which pride feeds upon, it is ſome outward thing, ſome outward excellency, that the fleſh takes occaſion by to ſwell, to over-wean itſelf, and to overlook all other: now when the fuel is taken away, the fire goes out; when the fodder and nouriſhment is taken away, theſe wanton ſteeds (you know) that grew fierce with pampering, they grow more tractable: ſo it is with the nature of man, take away that which makes him fierce, and then when his fierce and high conceits are taken away, he will be tame: take away that which feeds his carnal diſpoſition, and he grows tractable and gentle. Thus then affliction and poverty outwardly in our condition, it helps to inward poverty of ſpirit and

and diſpoſition; for it takes takes away that which inflames the fancy of a carnal man. A carnal man thinks himſelf as great and as good as he hath poſſeſſions of the things of this life; and the devil enlargeth his conceit more upon the imagination, to think theſe things to be a deal greater than they are: we come afterward by experience to ſee them nothing but vanity: but this is in man without grace, we are prone (as I ſaid) to ſurfeit of them, they are too ſtrong for us to digeſt and overcome, and therefore God takes them away, that he may help the inward diſpoſition of our ſouls.

Afflictions and poverty ſanctified, they have a power to bring us to God, and to keep us in, and to recover us when we are fallen. They bring us in, as we ſee in Manaſſes, and in the prodigal ſon, affliction and poverty they brought him to know himſelf; they brought him home, he was not himſelf before; they brought him to inward poverty: when he could not be ſatisfied ſo much as with huſks abroad, it was time for him to look home again. So when we are in the ſtate of grace, it keeps and pales us in, "God hedgeth us in with thorns," that we may not run out. And then if we fall, it recovers us, and fetcheth us in again by embittering ſinful courſes to us. We ſee then, affliction and poverty is ſanctified to God's children, to work an inward ſight of their ſpiritual wants.

Uſe 1.—Take notice hence of the poiſon and ſinfulneſs of our corrupt nature, that defiles itſelf in the bleſſings of God; ſo that God cannot otherwiſe fit us for grace, but by ſtripping us of thoſe things that are good in themſelves. This ſhould abaſe us very much, conſidering that thoſe things that ſhould be helps to us, to raiſe us up to God, that ſhould be glaſſes to ſee the love of God in, our nature uſeth them as clouds to keep God from us, and to faſten, and fix upon the things themſelves, ſo that there is no other remedy, but God muſt ſtrip us naked of them: this conſideration ſhould humble us.

Uſe 2.—And let us make this uſe of it: Let us know when any abaſement is ſanctified to us, it comes from God's love. If we find any affliction make us inwardly more humble and tractable, and more pliable, certainly it comes from love, and is directed to our good. For it is well taken away in earthly things, that is ſupplied in heavenly and ſpiritual. What if God take away ſuch outward honours, and reſpects, and riches; if God make it up in graces that are eternal, that make us truly and inwardly

wardly good, which all the outward things in the world cannot do? All the empires in the world cannot make a man an honeſt man: they may make him worſe; they may be ſnares to make him forget God and himſelf; they may be a means of his damnation without wondrous care. What if God take away a great deal of theſe things, and make them up in favours of a higher kind?" Therefore if we find God ſanctify any outward abaſement for the inward good of our ſouls, let us bleſs him for it, and take it in good part, as an evidence of his love; for God thus deals with his children, he ſanctifies their outward abaſement for their inward good, to draw them nearer to himſelf.

Therefore thoſe that are weak in their condition (for a man may be poor in regard of his condition, though not inwardly poor) thoſe that are broken in their condition outwardly, they may know whether it be in love or no, if they find this condition ſanctified to a better diſpoſition. For as all things in general work for the beſt "to them that love God:" ſo this one, eſpecially affliction and poverty, works for good to them that love God; God ſanctifies it to them for that end.

Therefore we ſhould examine, when we are under any croſs, ſee how it works upon us, whether by it we are humbled or no, whether we join with God or no; for thoſe that belong to God, have the graces of the ſpirit, to join with him in the work; when he afflicts them, they labour to afflict themſelves; when he goes to humble them outwardly, they humble themſelves; when he goes about to make them poor, to wean them from the love of the world, they wean themſelves, and join with God. As we ſee the phyſician by his art and ſkill, when he ſees nature working away, then he will help nature, till the cure be wrought: ſo God gives his ſpirit to thoſe that are his, to work with him. When God goes about to take them down, they will take down themſelves too, and ſo they grow inwardly better, together with their outward abaſement.

Thoſe therefore that ſwell, and ſtorm, and murmur, and rage, what do they get but more ſtripes? They get not out of trouble by it; but if they belong to God, they get ſtripes upon ſtripes. What gets the horſe at laſt by ſhaking off his rider that is ſkilful? more ſpurring, and more ſtrokes: ſo when men are under God's hand afflicted any way, and labour not to make a good uſe of it; but will pull the rod out of God's hand, and ſwell and pine, if they belong to God they get more ſtripes,—

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Therefore let us kiſs the rod, and the hand that holds it: God is about a good work, let him alone; deſire him rather to ſanctify the viſitation and abaſement, than remove it. A gracious heart deſires rather the ſanctification, than the removal.

Uſe 3.—Again, hence we learn, not to "deſpiſe the brother of low degree;" and we ſhould "not have the faith of Chriſt in reſpect of perſons." We ſhould not take ſcandal at the church, that it is uſually in a mean condition in this world; for the church is always rich in another kind of riches; the church is rich in reverſion, it hath heaven and happineſs; and the church is rich in bills and promiſes. The church is rich in an apparent pledge, that is worth all the world beſides, that is, in Chriſt, "If he have given us his ſon, will he not with him give us all things elſe?" The church is rich in this world indeed; "for all things are yours, and you are Chriſt's." Chriſt carries riches for the church, and diſpenſeth them for the church as occaſion ſerves. Indeed Chriſt's riches are the church's riches: the church cannot be poor if Chriſt be rich; it is only a medicinal poverty, it is God's diſpenſation to fit them for better riches. As a wiſe phyſician purgeth a foul body, till he bring it almoſt to ſkin and bone; but why? That having made it poor, there may be a ſpring of better blood and ſpirits.

Let us take no offence therefore at God's diſpenſations, either towards others, or ourſelves, if we find him by his holy ſpirit ſanctifying that outward condition to a holy inward bent and diſpoſition of ſoul to God-ward. It is a happy affliction and poverty, and abaſement, whatſoever it be that draws us near to God, in whom we have more ſupply than we can have want in the world. God never takes away any thing from his children in this world, but he gives them more in better things: that is always his courſe, "the poor receive the goſpel," the goſpel is preached to them, and they receive it; thoſe that by their outward abaſements are brought to a ſight of their ſpiritual wants, and thereupon to hunger after Chriſt.

Again, in that this our outward poverty helps to inward poverty of the ſoul, outward afflictions help the inward diſpoſition; hence we ſee likewiſe this truth, that

"Providence is ſerviceable to predeſtination and election."

God in election, hath a purpoſe to call us out of the world, to ſave our ſouls. Providence, that is a general government of all things in the world. Election is in order to ſalvation, he hath

hath choſen us to a ſupernatural end, and fits us for it, by calling and ſanctification. Now how doth providence ſerve the decree of election? Thus; whom God purpoſeth to ſave, to bring to an end above nature, he directs providence, ſo that all things ſhall ſerve for that end; therefore he encourageth them with outward things, or takes outward things from them (in his providence) as may ſerve his purpoſe in election, to ſave their ſouls. He hath a purpoſe to ſave them; therefore providence works all things for their good, Rom. viii. 28. All things (by the over-ruling providence of God) are ſerviceable to the higher degree of love that God bears to his children, to ſerve his purpoſe, to bring them to heaven. Thereupon comes the diſpenſation of riches or poverty honour or abaſement; he takes liberty of outward things concerning this life, to give, or take them, as they may ſerve the ſpiritual and beſt good of his children.

Therefore God's children, when they ſee God intends their good, in taking away the things of this life, in letting them blood as it were for their health, they ſhould bleſs God, as well for taking as for giving, as Job did. And there is as great mercy and love hid in taking away bleſſings, as in conveying of them. "I will leave an afflicted and poor people." In the original, it is poor, and mild, and gentle; poverty of eſtate, and poverty of ſpirit, the diſpoſition of the ſoul, come almoſt in one word, and indeed in God's children they are joined together; for he ſanctifies all diſpenſations and carriages of himſelf towards them. When God hath a purpoſe to ſave a man, every thing ſhall help him homeward. And there is not a better outward argument to know a man's ſtate in grace, than to ſee how the carriage of things ſerves God's purpoſe to do good to his ſoul: when we ourſelves are bettered in our inward man, by whatſoever befals us. God complains of the Jews, they were as "reprobate ſilver," becauſe he had melted them, and they were never a whit the better: they were like droſs conſumed in the melting. God's children are as gold refined; thoſe that find themſelves refined and bettered, it is an evidence that they are God's: becauſe there is a providence ſerving their ſpiritual good, directing all things to that end. But from their condition, we come to the diſpoſition implied, inward and ſpiritual poverty.

Now this poverty is not a mere want of grace; to be poor in ſpirit, is not to be poor of that ſpirit, or to be of a poor ſpirit: to be of a poor ſpirit is to have no goodneſs, no worth at all, but to be of a dejected baſe mind. God's children are not ſo,

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there are none more courageous than they, when they are called to it. It is not this poverty of ſpirit, to have no goodneſs at all. But to be poor in ſpirit, is a ſtate and diſpoſition of ſoul, that hath ſome goodneſs, wherein they ſee a want of further goodneſs: they have ſo much goodneſs and worth, as to ſee an unworthineſs in themſelves, and a greater worthineſs out of themſelves. They are ſenſible of their own want, and ſee they have not means of ſupply in themſelves, and they ſee an all-ſufficiency out of themſelves, in God, in Chriſt; they ſee a neceſſity of dependence for ſupply out of themſelves in their whole condition till they come to heaven. In a word, this poverty is a ſight of our own nothingneſs in ourſelves, and beſides that, our own inability; and a ſight of ſufficiency out of ourſelves, and a deſire of it, and likewiſe a hope of ſupply from thence, which hope carries us to endeavour, and to waiting till we have ſupply.

This will better appear, if we diſtinguiſh of this poverty in ſpirit by the two degrees of it. There is a poverty of ſpirit, before we are in the ſtate of grace, before we are in Chriſt; and a poverty after.

The poverty before we are in a ſtate of grace, is, when God by his ſpirit, together with his word and work of correction, doth open the eyes of our ſouls to ſee what we are by nature, what we are in ourſelves. It is a work of God's convincing ſpirit to give us a true view into our own condition, and with the light to work a ſenſe, and from a ſight and ſenſe, and thorough conviction, comes a wondrous abaſement, and a deſire to be otherwiſe than we are. There is ſome hope in ſpiritual poverty in God's children before their converſion, which ſtirs them up to look upon Chriſt, and to the mercy of God in Chriſt: and this ſtirs them up to beg, and to uſe all means, and at length God is gracious, and anſwers all the deſires of their ſouls. This is before they were in grace; for before a chriſtian is a ſound chriſtian, he muſt he driven out of himſelf. Naturally we are prone to cleave to ſomething, either out of ourſelves, or in ourſelves; and we muſt be fired out by a ſight and ſenſe of the miſery we are in.

We ſee God hath taken this courſe alway in Scripture. This courſe he took with Adam, he cites him, arraigns him, condemns him: he lets him ſee what a miſerable creature he was; as no man on earth was ever ſo miſerable till he felt the ſweetneſs

neſs of the promiſed ſeed: he that had been in ſo great happineſs as he was, to have his conſcience ſo galled as his was afterward; to feel ſuch miſery for the preſent as he did; he muſt needs be very miſerable, as indeed he was the moſt miſerable man that ever was ſince his time. It is the greateſt unhappineſs for a man to have been happy; for his former happineſs makes his preſent unhappineſs more ſenſible. When God had prepared Adam thoroughly, then he raiſed him up with the promiſed ſeed. God deals as he dealt with Eliah; firſt, he caſts him down with earthquakes and ſtorms, and then he comes in a ſtiller voice. It is for that end that John the Baptiſt comes before Chriſt to level all; to caſt down the "mountains, and fill up the valleys;" for all muſt be laid flat to Chriſt; we muſt lay ourſelves at his feet, and be content to be diſpoſed of by him, before we know what belongs to being in Chriſt; there muſt be poverty of ſpirit antecedent therefore. We ſee this lively ſet out in the prodigal ſon, that while he had any thing in the world to content him, he never looks homeward; but when he ſaw ſuch an emptineſs in all things he met with, that he could not be ſatisfied with huſks, then he began to think of going home, and that there was ſome hope, he had a father that would receive him. I will be ſhort in this, becauſe the other is mainly intended.

If we would know and diſcern by ſome evidences, whether we have been poor in ſpirit, in this preparative poverty or no:

1. Let us conſider what we have judged of our condition by nature: whether ever we have been convinced of the ill condition we are in; for if there be not conviction of ſin, there will not be conviction of righteouſneſs, as you have it, John xvi.—There are three works of the ſpirit, "to convince of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment;" of ſpiritual government.—The ſpirit before it convinceth us that we have the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and convinceth us of the neceſſity of government and holy life in Chriſt (which is called there judgment) he convinceth of ſin, which is an antecedent work. Let us examine ourſelves, whether the ſpirit has had ſuch a work or no.

2. Where this conviction and poverty is, a man ſees an emptineſs and vanity in all things in the world whatſoever, but in Chriſt.

3. And there is a deſire of the grace and favour of God above all things. Aſk a poor man what he would have; he would have

have that which may ſupply his poverty and want. Aſk a man that is ſpiritually poor before he be in Chriſt, what would you have? O mercy and pardon; offer him any thing elſe in the world, it contents him not: but that will content him, the ſenſe and perſuaſion of God's love and mercy in Chriſt Jeſus.

4. Where this poverty of ſpirit is, there will be a wondrous earneſtneſs after pardon and mercy, and after grace; to be in another condition, a man will labour as for life. If you come to a poor man that labours for a living, and aſk him, why do you labour ſo? (he will wonder at your idle queſtion) I may ſtarve elſe, he will ſay. A man that is ſpiritually poor, and ſees what a ſtate he is in, he labours in the uſe of means to have an inward ſenſe of God's love, to find ſome beginnings of the creature, to find a change, to be otherwiſe than he is, he ſees he muſt periſh elſe; there is a prizing and eſtimation in him of mercy, and pardon above all things in the world, and a making after it.

5. It is alway joined likewiſe with a wondrous abaſing of himſelf; he thinks himſelf not worth the ground he goes on, till God hath mercy on him in Jeſus Chriſt. This is not ſo ſenſible in thoſe that are brought up in the church, or that have religious thoughts put into them continually in both kinds; both concerning their own eſtate by nature, and withal concerning grace and mercy in Chriſt. Therefore grace is inſtilled into them by little and little, and the change is not ſo ſenſible. But where the converſion is any thing ſudden, from an ill courſe of life to a better: God works ſuch a poverty of ſpirit before he bring a man to Chriſt. In Matt. v. it is the beginning of all happineſs, the bleſſedneſs that leads to the reſt, "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And indeed thoſe that are poor in ſpirit, are bleſſed, though they have not yet the ſenſe of God's love ſo much as they deſire; for this draws on all the reſt (as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.) To be poor in ſpirit therefore, is to ſee that we have no good in ourſelves, that we are beggars and bankrupts, and have no means to pay, or ſatisfy; and this ſtirs up deſire, and the uſe of means, and all the qualifications that follow there, "Hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs, and mourning, and meekneſs." For this will follow; a man that is poor in ſpirit, ſay what you will to him, he is ſo tractable and meek; let God do what he will with him, ſo he give him grace, if he will caſt him down, ſo be it. "What ſhall we do to be ſaved?"

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Implying a pliableneſs to take any courſe, he is willing to do or to ſuffer any thing.

And indeed there muſt be ſuch a poverty of ſpirit, (before we can believe in Chriſt) whereby we may be convinced of our debts, and of our inability to pay thoſe debts, and our miſery, that we are in danger to be caſt into eternal bondage for them, there muſt be this before: for elſe we will never repair to Chriſt, nor God's mercy in him. "The full ſtomach deſpiſeth an honey comb," we will not reliſh Chriſt, nor value him as we ſhould.

2. Then again without this, we will not be thankful to God as we ſhould be; who is thankful to God, but he that ſees before what need he ſtands in of mercy, and of every drop of the blood of Chriſt?

3. And then we will not be fruitful; for who is ſo fruitful a Chriſtian as he that is thankful? and this depends upon the other. A Chriſtian that was never truly caſt down, and laid low by the ſpirit of bondage, he is a barren Chriſtian: the other having taſted of the love of God in Chriſt, the "very love of Chriſt conſtrains him;" and he ſtudies to be "abundant in the work of the Lord," as St. Paul ſaith, 2 Cor. v. and every way to "ſhew forth the praiſes of him that hath called him out of darkneſs into his marvellous light," 2 Cor. xv.

4. Again, this is the ground (when men are not ſufficiently humbled before) that they fall away dangerouſly, it is the ground of apoſtacy, becauſe they did not feel the ſmart of ſin. He that hath ſmarted for his eſtate before, and knows what it is to be in ſuch a condition, he will be loth ever to come into the priſon again. Therefore the ground of careful walking is a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs and miſery; the more we are convinced of this, the more careful and watchful we will be, that we never come into that curſed condition again.

5. And indeed it is an error in the foundation which is not mended in the fabric (as we ſay) when there is an error in poverty of ſpirit at the firſt, when the work of humiliation is not kindly wrought; hence is the defect in all the whole carriage of a Chriſtian. The foundation of God's building lies low, he digs deep: God lays his foundation oft times as low as hell itſelf (in a manner.) He brings his children to ſee that which he means they ſhall never feel, to ſee his wrath againſt ſin, that ſo he may build upon this foundation. For chriſtianity it is an excel-

excellent frame, it is a frame for eternity, a building for ever; therefore it must have a sure foundation, which must be laid in humiliation and poverty of spirit. An error in the first digestion is not amended in the second; if that be not good, the rest are naught; if there be not found humiliation, nothing will be found afterward. Therefore we should desire, that God by his spirit would help us more and more to know what we are in ourselves, that we may get to be what we are in Christ.

But there is a continual frame and disposition of soul, which is a poverty in spirit, that accompanies God's children all the days of their life, till they be in heaven, till they enjoy that riches that is laid up there for them; and that is especially here meant. And indeed it is an ingredient into all the passages of salvation. For,

1. In justification there must be a poverty of spirit, to make us see that there is no righteousness in ourselves, or that can come from us, that is able to stand against the law, and against the justice of God: all is defiled, and spotted, and unanswerable. And upon this poverty, and apprehension of what is defective in ourselves, comes an admiration of that righteousness of God in Christ, (for it is of God's devising, and of God's approving, and of God's working, Christ being God and man) to force us every day to renew our right in the righteousness of Christ, and to be "found in him." There is such a poverty of spirit, as to account all loss and dross and nothing, to be willing to part with all to be "found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, but that which is of God in Christ," as Paul divinely speaks, Philip. iii. So it is necessary in that main passage of justification, to be poor in spirit; that is, to see a defect in our own righteousness to stand against God's justice, "who is a consuming fire:" it is requisite in regard of our daily living by faith in justification.

2. In the whole course of sanctification, there must of necessity be poverty of spirit; that is, a sense that we have no sanctifying grace of ourselves, but we must fetch it from the fulness of Christ, whose fulness is for us: "of his fulness we receive grace for grace"

The ground of this is, that now in the covenant of grace all is of grace, both of justification and sanctification, all is of grace, nothing but grace. God hath set himself to get the glory of his free grace and mercy now in Jesus Christ. Therefore as our

our ſalvation is wrought out of us altogether, by our ſurety, the ſecond Adam, Chriſt: ſo our righteouſneſs is altogether out of ourſelves, whereby we appear righteous before God. It is his, and given to us by marriage, being one with him, his righteouſneſs is ours. And likewiſe in him we have the principle of all grace; he is the principle of our life, the root and foundation of ſpiritual life and ſanctification. "Without me you can do nothing." So that in Chriſt we have all that concerns our ſpiritual life in ſanctification and juſtification, becauſe it is a ſtate of grace. Adam had it in himſelf, though God at the firſt clothed him with his image; yet notwithſtanding he had not ſuch a neceſſity as we have, to go to Chriſt for all: but now in the ſecond Adam Chriſt, we muſt fetch grace for every thing from him. Therefore there muſt be poverty in regard of our knowledge; we have no ſpiritual knowledge of ourſelves: and poverty in regard of our affections; we have no joy, no peace, no comfort of ourſelves, no delight in good things, nor no ſtrength to them; we have all from Chriſt. "By grace" (ſaith the apoſtle,) "I am what I am;" 2 Cor. xv. as if grace had given him his being, his form, as we ſay. Indeed ſo it doth; grace gives a Chriſtian his form, and being, his work, and his working; for all working is from the inward being and form of things. By grace we are what we are in juſtification, and work what we work in ſanctification, it is by what we have freely from Chriſt; therefore in that reſpect there muſt be poverty of ſpirit.

Nay, I ſay more, in every action, when we are in the ſtate of grace, and have had the beginnings of the new creature in us, there needs poverty of ſpirit, in regard of our own inability to perform every action. For even as it is in our form, the life and ſoul, there is a need of it in every moving and ſtirring, ſo there is a need of the ſpirit of grace (which is as the form, and life, and being of a Chriſtian) to every holy action; "In him we live, and move, and have our being," ſaith the apoſtle. ("In him:") that is, in God reconciled to Chriſt, we have not only our being, that is, our form: but in him we live, and move to every particular act. We are no wiſer in particular than God makes us on the ſudden; the wiſeſt man will be a fool, if God leave him to his own wit. We are no ſtronger in every particular act that needs ſtrength, than God ſupplies us with ſpiritual ſtrength. We are no holier than God by his ſpirit ſhines on us, and raiſeth our ſouls in particular actions.

So

So that it is not only neceſſary that we have grace at the firſt to make us Chriſtians; but we muſt have a government of the ſpirit, from whence we muſt have an influence to every particular act. Though we have grace, yet we cannot bring forth that grace to act, without new grace. Even as trees, though they be fitted to bear fruit, as the vine, &c. yet without the influence of the heavens, they cannot put forth that fitneſs in fruit; ſo though we be fitted by the ſpirit of God, yet we cannot put it forth to particular acts when occaſion ſerves, without the influence of heaven to promote and further that grace, and applying our ſpirits to every holy action by removing the impediments that would hinder it, adding new ſupply and ſtrength to help grace. If the temptations be too ſtrong, as ſometimes they are, former grace will not ſerve without a new ſupply of ſtrength. As he that may carry a leſſer burthen, cannot carry a greater without new ſtrength; ſo in every temptation there is required more ſtrength than the former; and in every new action there is required, not only a continuance of grace, but a freſh ſupply of ſtronger grace.

And for want of this, the beſt of God's ſaints have fallen foully. Though they have had grace in them, yet notwithſtanding the ſpirit hath left them to themſelves in regard of new ſupply, becauſe they have been conceited, they have not been poor enough in ſpirit. As Peter, he was conceited of his own ſtrength, "Though all men forſake thee, yet I will not." This conceit moved God in mercy (as well as in juſtice,) to leave him to himſelf, that by his fall he might learn to ſtand another time, and not truſt his own ſtrength. The beſt of us all, I ſay, when there is any thing to be done, we had need of a freſh influence of grace, and freſh light to ſhine upon us.

It ſhould enforce perpetual poverty of ſpirit, to ſee the want that is in ourſelves, and the ſupply that is out of ourſelves, and to make uſe of that by going out of ourſelves, and making towards him, in whom is all our ſupply. In all our communion we have with God (which is the happineſs of our eſtate) this frame and diſpoſition of ſoul, to be poor in ſpirit, it is neceſſary in every act. Even in our very prayers for grace, we are ſo void of it, that we want ability to aſk for what we want. We muſt have that from the ſpirit, not only grace, but that diſpoſition of ſoul which carries us to God: a ſpirit fitting us to pray muſt be alſo given us, ſince we know not what to aſk for.—We of ourſelves are ſo poor, that we not only want grace and

ability for action, but we have not ability to ask: but God's spirit must dictate our prayers, and give us motions, and make us sensible of our wants, and must enable our faith to cherish those graces, and make us go out of ourselves even in our very prayers. What a state is this then! Had we not need to be poor in spirit all our life time, who have not so much as ability to go out of ourselves for supply from another, but that must come from Christ too? As St. Augustin, who was a great advancer of the grace of God, and an abaser of man, he had indeed St. Paul's spirit; saith he, we should boast and glory of nothing, because nothing is ours. We have need of this poverty of spirit in the whole tenor of our Christian life.

Again, in the actions of this life, how wofully do we miscarry, because we think we have wit and strength enough, and set upon things in our own wit and strength, we speed, and so have success answerable. Where the beginning is confidence, the end is shame, of any business, even of this life. What is the reason that oft times the great and weighty business of this life has not answerable success? Many times it falls out so, as one said of general councils, they seldom were successful, because men come with confidence and wit for victory, rather than truth. Certainly there is less success in great matters, because men come with self confidence. Therefore it is a good sign that God means to bless a great business, when he puts it into the hearts of those that are agents in it, to seek him in the affairs of this life. We must be poor in spirit, to see that the carriage and success comes from him.

Well, so it is in suffering likewise; we cannot suffer the least cross of ourselves, but with murmuring and repining, without strength from him. When Moses came to the "waters of strife," his spirit was discovered; he could not endure the harshness and rebellion of the people. A Christian comes sometimes to such opposition, that his spirit is moved, and he discovers much corruption. It is so with the best men, even Moses, a meek man, when he had such temptations and provocations, it moved him. We must labour to get a greater spirit than our own, to have the spirit of God to work this spiritual poverty in us.

This poverty of spirit, as we call it, is "spiritual vacuum," spiritual emptiness. You know in Philosophy, there is nothing empty in the world, but it is filled either with air or some kind of

of body, and to avoid the enemy of nature, emptineſs, things will change their ſeat; heavy things will go upward, and things that are above, will come below to avoid emptineſs, that is contrary to nature; there being a fulneſs of things with one body or other; ſo I ſay, ſpiritual poverty it is an emptying of the ſoul, which of force always brings better things in. Wherefoever this emptying of the ſoul is, this making of ourſelves poor, it is upon good ground by this courſe: it is always ſuch a vacuum and emptineſs of one thing, as brings in another better.—The ſoul can never be altogether empty; when wind, and vain ſtuff is out, then come better things in, which St. Paul calls "the fulneſs of God;" he prays, and wiſhes that they might "be filled with the fulneſs of God;" then come fulneſs of knowledge and underſtanding, and fulneſs of affection, and fulneſs of contentment, and complacency in the will, and all the ſoul hath an anſwerable fulneſs to the proportion of the emptying itſelf of itſelf.

In the next place, let us come to diſcover this diſpoſition of poverty of ſpirit, where it is.

And then ſhew ſome helps to it.

Firſt, to diſcover where this bleſſed frame of ſoul is. Surely thoſe that are thus poor in ſpirit, they are full of prayer.—"The poor man ſpeaks ſupplications," as the wiſe man ſaith, that is his dialect. The poor man is much in prayer, he that is poor in ſpirit is much in ſupplication: for prayers they are the ambaſſadors of the poor ſoul to God, to ſupply it with the riches of his grace. Therefore where there is no prayer, there is no ſenſe of poverty, but there is a Laodicean temper, as if they were rich enough. You have a company of men, they ſay they cannot pray privately, their ſpirits are barren. This intimates much pride of ſpirit; for if a man be ſenſible of his wants, you need not ſupply him with words. If a poor tenant come to his landlord, and find he hath a hard bargain, let him alone for telling his tale; I warrant you he will lay open the ſtate of his wife and children, and the ill year he hath had, he will be eloquent enough. Take any man that is ſenſible of his wants, and you ſhall not need to dictate words to him: There is no man that hath a humble and broken heart, (though he be never ſo illiterate) but he will have a large heart to God in this kind.

2. Again, there is a care of uſing all means. Where poverty

is, there will be a going out of ourſelves unto places where God beſtows any riches. They that are poor, and have no victuals at home, they will go to market rather than they will ſtarve; and thoſe that find in themſelves want of grace and comfort, ſurely they will go out of themſelves, they will go to God's market, they will attend upon the means. He that is like to be arreſted for debt, and hath nothing at home, it is time for him to ſeek abroad for ſupply: ſo when a man is poor ſpiritually, ready to be ſnared and catched in every thing, for want of ſpiritual grace, he will labour for ſtrength in the uſe of all means. Therefore, thoſe that are of a Laodicean ſtamp, who think there is too much preaching, too much hearing, and too much reading; and what need all this ado? Alas, they were never humbled, they were never ſenſible of their ſtate by nature, and are not yet in the ſtate of grace: for the ſoul of a true chriſtian is always in the ſtate of ſpiritual poverty, ſo that it reliſheth ſpiritual meats, and is not fed with huſks. A ſoul that is ſpiritually poor, will diſcern in the uſe of means; this is nouriſhing, this is for the ear, this is ſavoury; alas it comes for food for ſupply. A poor ſoul, that finds the want of grace and ſtrength and comfort, it judgeth of the means by what it finds; there will be a uſe of all means, and likewiſe ſome ability to taſte where there is true poverty of ſpirit.

3. Again, where this inward poverty of ſpirit is, it will make God's children wondrous thankful, yea thankful for a little grace. A poor man that is ſenſible of his poverty, will be more thankful for a penny, than another man for a pound who hath money of his own. A ſoul that ſees the want of grace, and withal ſees the excellency of grace, is thankful to God that he will work any thing in ſuch a poor defiled ſoul as he is; that he will work any good motions, any good affections, any degree of faith, that he will give him any aſſurance of ſalvation. O, he thinks, what a God is this! He breaks out with the apoſtles, Peter and Paul, that had both been ſinners themſelves, and found grace, O they were much in thankfulneſs! "Bleſſed be God the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt," &c. A thankful ſoul is a poor ſoul, and a poor ſoul is always a thankful ſoul. He that is poor, he knows he hath little, and deſerves little: therefore, knowing that he deſerves nothing, he is thankful for, and content with any thing: a humble man is always thankful, and that is the reaſon, that God may have his glory from him; he is forced ſometimes to humble and abaſe him, he

ſhould

ſhould have no ſacrifice from him elſe. A proud man, a conceited man, ſo dotes upon his own worth, that he forgets the giver, he makes himſelf an idol to him: therefore, ſuch are uſurpers of what they have, they enter upon God's bleſſings, not conſidering from whom they have them. They deny God his tribute of thankfulneſs, becauſe they are proud: but a man that is poor in ſpirit, he enters upon all by the title of gift, and receives all from God in the form of a poor man: therefore whatſoever he hath, he returns thanks for it again. An unthankful ſoul, therefore, is a proud ſoul: a thankful ſoul is humble and abaſed always; and the more humble and empty the ſoul is, the more thankful it is for every degree of grace and comfort.

Again, a ſoul that is thus diſpoſed, that is poor in ſpirit, it is willing to reſign itſelf to Chriſt's government, with ſelf-denial of any thing it is able to do of itſelf: it is ready to ſay, Lord, I have neither wit of mine own to govern myſelf, nor any ſtrength and ability of my own, therefore I put myſelf upon thy government, I deſire to follow thy light, and to go on in thy ſtrength. There is always a reſignation to Chriſt's government, and that in fear and trembling: for whom we reſign ourſelves unto, ſurely we will have a care not to diſpleaſe them. A dependent life is always an awful life: for when a man hath reſigned himſelf to the government of another, and knows he muſt depend upon him, he will have a care not to diſpleaſe ſuch an one; for he thinks, if I diſpleaſe him, he will withdraw his maintenance and countenance from me, and then what am I? ſo the ſoul that thinks it hath all from God, and from the ſpirit of Chriſt, it reſigns itſelf to the ſpirit of Chriſt; and withal, it is wondrous fearful not to grieve and diſpleaſe the ſpirit; for he thinks with himſelf, my life is but a dependent life, my graces are but dependent: let God but withdraw the beams of his ſpirit, and I ſink; let him withdraw his comfort and his ſtrength, what am I? nothing but darkneſs, deadneſs, and confuſion. Thoſe therefore that give not themſelves up to Chriſt's government, but are governed by rules of policy, by the example of others, and have baſe dependence on others, they know not what ſpiritual poverty is: they think there is a ſufficiency in themſelves, to rule and govern themſelves, as if Chriſt's were not ſufficient, they are not ſo diſpoſed as the apoſtle requires, they work not out their ſalvation with fear and trembling, becauſe God gives the will and the deed. The meaning is this, we

ſhould work out our ſalvation with a holy fear and trembling, a jealous fear, a ſon-like fear, leſt we diſpleaſe God; why? he gives both the will to do good, and when he hath done that, he gives the ability of the deed itſelf. We cannot do any thing: therefore we had need to walk in an awful condition, and not diſpleaſe him in any thing, leſt he withdraw the aſſiſtance of his ſpirit, and leave us to ourſelves, and then we ſhall fall to his diſhonour, to the diſcredit of religion, to the waſting of our own comfort, and the advantage of Satan. This is the temper of a man that is poor in ſpirit, he gives himſelf up to Chriſt's government, and depends upon it, and thereupon he is wondrous fearful to diſpleaſe him in any thing.

There are ſome that know not what belongs to this, that hope to be ſaved by Chriſt, and yet they will grieve the ſpirit they will venture into any place, upon any ſight, into any company; but if ever they had been acquainted with the government of Chriſt's ſpirit, they would know what it was to grieve the ſpirit, and the ſpirit would grieve them too: it is a ſign they have not the ſpirit of God, becauſe he doth not check them when they have done. Therefore your adventurous careleſs perſons, that are indifferent for all things, for all companies and places, that do not watch over themſelves, and over their words and carriage, they have not this poverty of ſpirit: for then they would know what it were to diſpleaſe God in any thing, to walk and to ſpeak looſely, becauſe hereby they grieve the ſpirit, and would preſently find, either want of grace or comfort. There is not one of many that are acquainted with the nature of this ſpiritual communion with God, and therefore they do not enjoy the happineſs that thoſe do, who are thus qualified, that are poor in ſpirit.

5. Again, a man that is poor in ſpirit, is very tractable, as it is in Iſaiah, "A child ſhall lead them. The lamb and the lion ſhall feed together, &c. and a child ſhall lead them:" that is, ſuch an one, you ſhall lead him with any counſel (let the perſon be never ſo mean,) having ſmarted for his ſins, and his own counſel and ways, "a child ſhall lead him;" that is, any man ſhall lead and move him to that which is good; he ſtands not upon terms.

6. And always he that is poor in ſpirit, he is no upbraider of other men's wants; he is more ſenſible of his own, than what he

he sees in other men: he is not prone to upbraid and object against them, their wants and conditions, he is so taken up with the sense of his own.

7. And lastly, he that is poor in spirit, is humbled in himself for spiritual wants: not so much for outward things, but because he hath not a large heart to God, because he finds impatience, because he finds not that heavenly mindedness, and strength to go through the duties that God requires; that his flesh is so backward, these things abase him and bring him on his knees, and not so much outward things, and answerably he looks for spiritual supply. When a man is humble and poor in spirit, he is not abased with any outward thing, that which he would have is mercy and grace. The apostle, when he would pray for all happiness to the churches, he prays for "grace, mercy, and peace;" for as they are more sensible of their spiritual wants, so they are carried in their desires after that what may give them satisfaction that way.

Use.—Let us labour to bring our souls to this blessed temper, to be poor in spirit, the happy temper that our Saviour began his preaching withal: the first thing he falls upon is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—But before I come to any directions for the getting this spiritual poverty, we must know and premise this caution, that we must not be so poor in spirit, as to deny the work of grace in our hearts. It is one thing to be poor in spirit, and to see our wants, and it is another thing to be unthankful and unkind, to deny the work of grace, and so to gratify satan; we must not give false witness against ourselves, and so deny the work of God's spirit in us, that is not poverty, but darkness of spirit; we are not acquainted with that grace that God hath enriched us with. Therefore where the soul is in a right temper, there is a double eye, one to see the defects and the stains of those graces we have, to see what we are wanting in of what we should be, and to see how our graces are stained, and that there is a mingling of our corruptions with them. The viewing with the one eye that we have any grace, that should make us cheerful, and thankful, and comfortably go on, considering that there are some beginnings that God will perfect: for he never repents of his beginnings. And then a sight of the want, and of the stains of those graces, that we mingle our corruptions with them, that works again this poverty of spirit to go still out of ourselves

to desire grace to purge and cleanse ourselves more and more. Therefore I beseech you let us remember that, that we do not unthankfully deny the work of grace, and think that to be poverty of spirit; as some do out of covetousness, because they have not what they would have, they think they have nothing at all; that is a spiritual covetousness. But let us be wise to discern what God hath wrought in our hearts, what he hath done for and in our souls. A holy man, you shall have him much in mourning and complaining, but it is of himself, not of God, as if God were wanting to him, you shall have a holy man in a perpetual kind of despair, but it is in himself, he hopes in God still. Remember this caution, that as we complain, so let us be sure it be of ourselves, always justifying God in his mercy; and if we despair, let us despair of ourselves, that we can do nothing of ourselves: but be sure to maintain (all we can) the hope of God's rich mercy in Christ.

Now having premised this caution: The way to come to spiritual poverty, among many others, is: First, to bring ourselves into the presence of God, to the presence of greater lights than our own. Men think themselves somebody when they are alone; yet when they consider, God sees them, whose eyes are a thousand times brighter than the sun; then they learn to abhor themselves in "dust and ashes," as we see Job did when God talked with him, when he saw God: and Abraham when he talked with God, he accounts himself dust and ashes. Let us bring ourselves into the presence of God, consider his holiness, his justice. And withal let us bring ourselves to greater lights than our own: that is, often come into the company of those that have greater grace than ourselves. The stars give no light when the sun is up; the stars are something in the night, but they are nothing in the day, and those that are conceited of their own excellencies, when they come into the presence, and company, and converse with those that are better than themselves, their spirit falls down, they are abased. It is a good course therefore not to love alway to be best in the company (as it is some mens vanity, because they will be conceited of their own worth) but to present ourselves before God in his ordinances, and present ourselves in communion and fellowship with others that are greater and richer in grace than ourselves, and so we may see our own wants. This is one direction to get spiritual poverty.

2.

2. Again, that we may come to be poor in ſpirit, let us conſider what we are, that we are creatures: the term whence creation begins is juſt nothing: it is ſo in the creatures in the world, God made all of nothing, and is it not ſo in the new creature much more? Therefore if I will be any thing in myſelf as of myſelf, ſurely I muſt look to be no creature of God's making: for grace is God's creature, therefore it muſt riſe of nothing, there muſt be a ſight of our own nothingneſs. Indeed a Chriſtian in himſelf is nothing now in the ſtate of grace; whatſoever he is for grace or glory, it is out of himſelf; he hath nothing in himſelf as of himſelf, all that he hath, he hath from Chriſt. He is poor in himſelf, but he hath riches enough in Chriſt, if he ſee his own poverty. He is a ſinner in himſelf, but he hath righteouſneſs enough in Chriſt, if he ſee his ſins. Let us know that this is a qualification to intereſt us in the good that is in Chriſt: we renew our right in Chriſt no otherwiſe than we renew the ſenſe of our own poverty and want. Would we ſee all in Chriſt, that we have riches, and wiſdom, and happineſs, and favour, and life, and all in him? With the ſame ſpiritual eye of the ſoul, let us ſee that we have nothing in ourſelves: for I can no otherwiſe renew that right and intereſt I have in Chriſt, but by renewing this ſight; we altogether ſhine in the beams of our huſband. The conſideration of this will be a means to work our care and endeavour towards it, that we are creatures, new creatures; and therefore we muſt riſe from nothing in ourſelves, and we muſt be maintained and ſupported by the new Adam, the ſecond Adam, and have freſh grace from him continually: "we move and live in him," as I ſaid before.

3. Again, that we may be poor in ſpirit, let us always be preſenting to ourſelves abaſing, emptying conſideration. What be they? Among the reſt, reflect our minds back to what we were before God ſhewed mercy upon us; how unprofitably we ſpent our days; what a deal of good we left undone that we might have done. For the preſent, conſider the imperfections that hang upon us, whereby we even defile the beſt performances that come from us; let us have in the eye of our ſoul preſented our ſpecial corruptions for the preſent. For the time to come let us preſent to our ſouls what will become of us ere long, that for outward things, which nature is prone to be highly conceited of, they ſhall lie in the duſt, theſe bodies of ours ſhall lie low in the duſt, all other things muſt be taken from us,

and

and we from them, we know not how ſoon; let us oft think and conſider of the vanity of all things, what will all things be ere long? They muſt all come to nothing, the fire will conſume all that is glorious in the world, there will be no excellency but the excellency of Chriſt, and his church, and children, and think of the day of judgment, what will ſtand for current then; think of the time of our diſſolution, how we ſhall appear before Chriſt; what we have in us that will give us confidence at that day, and time, to look upon him with comfort, that thoſe thoughts of time to come, of death and judgment, and eternity, may not be frightful to us. The conſideration of theſe things will cauſe us to look about us, and make us indeed poor in ſpirit.

Eſpecially let us conſider what our profeſſion requires of us; not by the law, let that go: but what in the covenant of grace we ſhould be, and are not, it will ſhame the beſt of us. Alas, how much good might we have done, that we have not! How have we failed in bringing honour and credit to our profeſſion? How barren have we been in good works? How unwatchful over our thoughts and ſpeeches, whereby we have ſtained our religion, and our conſciences, and grieved the ſpirit of God? Let us conſider how ſhort we are of what we might have been, and this will bring inward ſhame and confuſion of ſpirit, from whence this temper of poverty of ſpirit comes. Conſider of theſe things, and enlarge them in your meditations. There is not a more fruitful ſpending of our thoughts (next to the conſideration of Chriſt, and the riches we have in him) than to conſider what we are in ourſelves; that we may be in a perpetual diſpoſition of ſoul, fit to receive the good that is to be had in Chriſt.

Two graces are the main graces that muſt go along with us all the days of our lives: this grace to go out of ourſelves, and another grace to go to another, that is better than ourſelves, in whom lies our happineſs. That we may go out of ourſelves, and the creature, and all that is in the creature, poverty of ſpirit is neceſſary, to ſee that there is not that which we poſſeſs in the creature that will ſtand out. The creature that is a particular good, for a particular caſe, to ſupply a particular want, and but for a time, it is fading and outward: but the comfort we muſt have, it muſt be ſpiritual and univerſal, to give contentment to the ſoul. The conſideration of theſe things will force

force us to go out of ourselves, this poverty of spirit, that we have not enough, to make us happy. The heathen men by the use of discretion and knowledge, had so much to see, that there is nothing in the world to make man happy; the negative part they knew well enough; but there must be another grace to carry us to a positive happiness, where that lies, and that is the grace of trust that follows. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people," that shall be disposed and prepared by their outward poverty for inward spiritual poverty, to go out of themselves to Christ, to trust in him.

And they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

This is the carriage of these poor and afflicted people. "They shall trust in the name of the Lord."

God hath no delight in afflicting his children, he joys and delights in the prosperity of his children; it is our sinful nature that forceth him to afflict us, that he may wean us from the world, because we are prone to surfeit here below. All that God doth is that we may trust in him, which we would never do, unless he did afflict us, and make us poor in spirit: but when we are afflicted and poor in spirit, and have nothing at home, we will go out abroad, as people in necessity will do: supply must be had either at home, or from without; and when the soul is beaten and driven out of itself (which requires much ado) then we are fit for this act here spoken of, to "trust in the name of the Lord." And the one is an evidence of the other. How shall we know that we are sufficiently humbled, and made poor in spirit when we trust in the name of the Lord.

In the unfolding of these words, take these for grounds, which I will but name.

First, That naturally every man will have a trust in himself, or out of himself.

Secondly, That God is the trust of the poor man; what he wants in himself, he hath in God: God is the rock or the castle to which he retires, he hath supply in him.

The third is, that

God is trusted as he is known.

They shall trust "in the name of the Lord." For God can be

be no otherwiſe truſted, than he hath made his will known. It is preſumptuous boldneſs to challenge any thing of God that we have not a promiſe for; or to attribute that to him that he is not: God is therefore truſted as he hath made himſelf by ſome name known to us. He hath made himſelf known by his attributes, by his nature and eſſence, Jehovah, and by his word, and the promiſes in his word: for his word is one of the beſt and ſweeteſt names whereby he hath made himſelf known.—The name of God is glorious in all the world, in the creation, and every creature hath a tongue, to ſhew forth the power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs of God: but what is this to us if we know not the will of God towards us? There is the name of God diſcovered, what he is in himſelf, ſomething of his power and wiſdom, &c. But what he is to us, gracious and merciful, and ſweet, that we muſt gather out of the diſcovery of his own breaſt. He muſt come out of that "light that none can attain unto," and diſcover himſelf as he hath done in his word: and by this name of God, his word, we come to make uſe of his other names. The next thing I will ſpeak of, is the improvement of God when he is known, to truſt in him, to put our truſt and confidence upon him. "They ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord."

For there muſt be an application of the ſoul to God; we muſt lay our ſouls upon God; though he be a rock, yet we muſt lay our ſouls upon him, and though he be a foundation, yet we muſt build upon him and his truth revealed. There is an adequate comfort in God and in the Scriptures, and ſuperabundant too, for all our neceſſities whatſoever, it tranſcends them all, there is more in the ſpring than we want ourſelves; yet notwithſtanding there muſt be grace in the ſoul, to repair to God, there muſt be a hand, an empty beggar's hand (ſuch as faith is) to reach that help that God yields; there muſt be a wing to fly to our tower; the wing of the ſoul is this truſt and faith; and when theſe two meet, faith or truſt, and God, what a ſweet meeting is there? For emptineſs and fulneſs, poverty and riches, weakneſs and ſtrength, to meet together, theſe will graſp ſweetly; for the excellency, and all-ſufficiency of the one, and the neceſſity of the other meeting together, breeds a ſweet correſpondency. We muſt truſt therefore in the name of the Lord; that is the way to improve whatſoever is in God, for our good.

Faith, the nature of it is, (after it hath applied itſelf to the grounds

grounds of comfort:) to draw virtue and ſtrength from God.—Of itſelf it is the moſt beggarly grace of all: Love is a rich grace, but yet notwithſtanding in the covenant of grace, wherein grace and mercy muſt have the glory, God hath eſtabliſhed ſuch a grace to rule there as aſcribes all out of itſelf, and is an empty grace of itſelf, to make uſe of the riches that is out of itſelf; therefore God hath made choice of this truſting inſtead of all other graces, as indeed leading to all other graces whatſoever. God brings us home by a contrary way to that we fell from him. How did we fall from God at the firſt, who was our rock, our defence and truſt? We fell from him by diſtruſt, by having him in jealouſy, as if he aimed more at himſelf, than at our good; ſo the devil perſuaded our firſt parents: the next way therefore to come back again to God, it muſt be to have good thoughts of God, not to have him in jealouſy; but to be convinced in our ſouls that he loves us better than we can love ourſelves (in ſpite of the devil and all his temptations:) ſo to truſt God is to rely upon him in life and death; therefore God hath appointed this grace, as he ſaith here. "They ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord."

Now becauſe we all pretend that we truſt in the name of the Lord, we ſhall firſt examine our truſt: let us try our truſt a little, that we may ſee whether it be true truſt or no. And then upon that we will give directions, how to come to this bleſſed condition, to "truſt in the name of the Lord."

For the firſt: I do not take truſt here for the firſt faith, which is the grace of union to receive Chriſt: but for the exerciſe of faith afterwards in a Chriſtian life; ſo we ſpeak of it as a fruit rather that comes from faith. And we may know our truſt in the name of the Lord, being now conceived as a gracious Father in Chriſt, clothed with the relation of a father; for ſo we muſt truſt him, not God abſolutely, for there is no comfort in an abſolute God, diſtinct from his relations; but when we apprehend him in relation, as a ſweet father in Chriſt, in that name, then the nature of God is lovely to us, between whom and us there was an infinite diſtance before. Now Chriſt being Emanuel, God with us, hath brought God and us together in terms of league. Now our nature is lovely to God in Chriſt, becauſe it is taken to the unity of his perſon, and God's nature is lovely to us, having made himſelf a father in Chriſt his beloved ſon.—Therefore when we ſpeak of God, our thoughts muſt run upon

God

God as thus conceived, as clothing himself with the sweet term of Father, our God in covenant, we must so apprehend him.

Now one evidence of this trust in this our God, is a care to please him in all things. 1. When we depend upon any man, we have a care to please. A tenant that fears to be thrust out, will strive to please his landlord. We that hold all upon this tenure, upon faith and trust in God; we should fear to displease him.

2. And there will be likewise an use of all means to serve God's providence and care of us, if we trust in him; or else it is a tempting and not a trusting. There are no men more careful in the use of means than those that are surest of a good issue and conclusion: for the one stirs up diligence in the other; assurance of the end stirs up diligence in the means. For the soul of a believing Christian knows that God hath decreed both, both fall under the same decree; when God purposed to do such a thing, he purposed to do it by such and such means.—Trust therefore is with diligence in the use of all means that God hath ordained. He that trusts a physician's skill, will be very careful to observe what was prescribed, and will omit nothing. It is but presumption, it is not trust, where there is not a care in the use of means: as we see many pretend to trust in God, and separate the means from the end, they are regardless of the means of salvation.

3. Again, those that trust in God, they are quiet when they have used the means. Faith hath a quieting power, it hath a power to still the soul, and to take up the quarrels, and murmuring, and grudgings that are there, and to set the soul down quiet: because it proposeth to the soul greater grounds of comfort, than the soul can see any cause of discomfort; the soul being reasonable, yields to the strength of the reason. Now when faith propounds grand comforts against all discouragements whatsoever, that overcomes them, that is greater in the way of comfort, than other things in the way of discouragement, the soul is quiet, it hopes comfort will be had, the soul is silent and at rest. We see in Psal. xliii. when there was a munity in David's soul, by reason of the perplexed state he was in, he falls a chiding downright with his soul, "Why art thou disquieted, O my soul! and why art thou troubled? But how doth he take

up

up the contention? "Truſt in God, he is thy God." So that whereſoever there is faith, there is a quiet ſoul firſt or laſt; there will be ſtirring at the firſt, the waters of the ſoul will not be quiet preſently. As in a pair of balances, there will be a little ſtirring when the weight is put in, till there be a poiſe: ſo in the ſoul there will be ſome ſtirring and moving, it comes not to a quiet conſiſtence, till there be ſome victory of faith with ſome conflict till at length it reſt, and ſtay the ſoul: for this power faith hath to quiet the ſoul, becauſe it bottoms the ſoul ſo ſtrongly, (there is reaſon for it) it ſets the ſoul upon God, and upon his promiſes. "Therefore he that truſts in God is as mount Sion," you may ſtir him ſometimes, and move him, but you cannot remove him; the ſoul is quiet, becauſe it is pitched upon a quiet object.

Therefore, where there is cheriſhing of diſturbance in the ſoul, and cheriſhing of doubts, there is no faith, or very little faith: becauſe it is the property of faith to ſilence the ſoul, and to make it quiet where it comes. This is one evidence and ſign of true faith. And this is diſcerned eſpecially in times of great trouble, for then the ſoul of the righteous is not diſquieted, as you have it in Pſal. cxii. "His heart is fixed, therefore he is not afraid of ill tidings." Add therefore this evidence to the reſt, that faith as it hath a quieting power; ſo it hath a power to free the ſoul from all baſe fears, from the tyranny of baſe fear.—There will ſome fear ariſe, we carry fleſh about us, and fleſh will always be full of objections, and trouble our peace: but notwithſtanding (this truſting in God) it will free the ſoul from the tyranny and dominion of baſe fears. If any news or tidings be of any great hard matter; I beſeech you who hath his ſoul beſt compoſed at that time? A ſound Chriſtian that hath made his peace with God, that hath his truſt in God, that knows what it is to make uſe of God, to repair to him. But for another man in the time of extremity and trouble, he runs hither and thither, he hath not a tower to go unto, he hath no place of refuge to repair to. Therefore he is worſe than the poor ſilly creature: there is not a creature but hath a retiring place. The poor conies have the rocks to go into, and the birds have their neſts, and every creature when night or danger approacheth they have their hiding places: only a wicked careleſs man that hath not acquainted himſelf with God, when troubles come, he hath no hiding, nor no abiding place; but lies open to the ſtorm

ſtorm of God's diſpleaſure; therefore he is ſurpriſed with fears and cares, and pulled in pieces with diſtraction: he is as a meteor that hangs in the clouds, he cannot tell which way to fall. But a Chriſtian is not ſuch a meteor, he falls ſquare which way ſoever he falls, caſt him which way you will: for his ſoul is fixed, he hath laid his ſoul upon his God. We ſee the difference in this between Saul and David; when David was in trouble "he truſted in the Lord his God," when he was ready to be ſtoned. What doth Saul when he was in trouble? he goes to the witch, and from thence to the ſword's point.

5. Again, where there is this excellent grace of truſting in God, and the ſoul is calmed by the ſpirit of God, to rely upon God in covenant as a father in Chriſt: it will rely upon God without means, and when all things ſeem contrary. So the ſpirit of God will difference a Chriſtian from a natural man, that will go ſo far as his brain can reach; if he can ſee how things can be compaſſed he will truſt God, as if God had not a larger comprehenſion than he. Where he ſees no way or means to contrive a deliverance, nor no means to ſatisfy his deſire, there the ſoul of a natural man ſinks and falls down. A politician will go as far as reaſon can carry him, but a Chriſtian, when he ſees no means, he knows God can make means: now when all things are oppoſite, if he hath a word of God, he will truſt God, even againſt the preſent ſtate and face of things, as Job ſaith, "Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him." Therefore in the ſenſe of ſin, becauſe there is a promiſe to ſinners, that if they confeſs their ſins God will pardon them; he will believe the forgiveneſs of ſins, though he feel the guilt of ſin. And in miſery he will believe an evaſion, and eſcape, and that God will ſupport him in it, becauſe God hath ſo promiſed.—And in "darkneſs, when he ſees no light," as it is Iſaiah I. 10. in ſuch a ſtate "he will truſt in God." As a child in the dark claſps about his father; ſo a child of God in darkneſs when he ſees no light, he will claſp about his God, and break through the clouds that are between God and his ſoul: as indeed faith hath a piercing eye, it pulls off the veil of God's face; though he ſeem angry, yet he will believe he is in covenant, and he is a father. Therefore though God ſhew himſelf in his dealing as offended; yet he argues, God may be offended with me, but he cannot hate, there is hope. Faith where it is in any ſtrength, it will believe in contraries. In death, when a man is turned to rottenneſs and duſt, faith apprehends life, and reſurrection, and glory

glory to come; it will truſt in God's means, or no means, if it hath a promiſe.

6. Again, he that truſts in God truly, will truſt him for all things, and at all times. For all things: for faith never chooſeth and ſingleth out its object to believe this, and not that; for all comes from the ſame God; therefore he that truſts God for one thing, will truſt him for all things. If I will truſt a man for many pounds, ſurely I will truſt him for a ſhilling. He that pretends he will truſt God, God will ſave me, God is merciful; and yet notwithſtanding will not truſt him for common things: is it an abuſive deluſion, and flattering of his own ſoul in vain: there is no ſuch truſt in him, becauſe he that truſts God for the main, will truſt him for the leſs. Therefore true truſt is for all things: he that truſts God for forgiveneſs of ſins, and found peace with God there, he will eaſily wreſtle in other baſer and leſs temptations. As God ſaith to Jacob, "Thou art Iſrael, thou haſt prevailed with God, and ſhalt prevail over men:" ſo a true Chriſtian, that in the grand point of forgiveneſs of ſins, (when his conſcience is ſurpriſed with the fear of God's wrath) hath gotten aſſurance of the pardon of his ſins, when he is to ſet upon other leſſer temptations he overcomes them eaſily. Therefore a Chriſtian will truſt God (as for forgiveneſs of ſins, and life everlaſting, ſo alſo) with his good name Oh, will ſome ſay, you will be reported of thus and thus; he cares not, he knows the cauſe is juſt, he will truſt his good name with God, "Who will bring a man's righteouſneſs forth clear as the noon day," as David ſpeaks. He that will not truſt God with his good name, is of a baſe ſpirit; and fear of diſgrace keeps many men from many juſt actions. He that truly truſts God, will truſt him with the righting of his cauſe; he will not pull God's office out of his hands, he will not revenge himſelf, but he will truſt God, God certainly will right me firſt or laſt, he will only uſe the legal means, and that quietly. But a man that is not acquainted with the ſpirit of God, is preſently moved with revenge, and hath not learned to overcome himſelf in the conflict. A man hath gone indeed very far in religion, that can conquer himſelf in this conflict, that can truſt his cauſe with God when he is wronged and overcome by might, &c. So our Saviour Chriſt committed his cauſe to him "that was able to judge righteouſly." Every true Chriſtian hath the ſpirit of Chriſt; he, when he was reviled, retorted not again; but

committed the cauſe to him that was able to judge righteouſly Shall I be able to commit my ſoul to God in the hour of death; and ſhall I not, in caſe of revenge, be able to commit my ſoul to God, when I have done that which peaceably I may do? I may ſuſpect that I am but yet an hypocrite, I have not true truſt in God.

Again, he that hath learned truly to truſt in God for the grand main matters, he will truſt him likewiſe with his poſterity, with his children, without uſing indirect means to make them rich, as if they could not be bleſſed unleſs they had ſuch a portion put into their hand when we die, as if God had not ſtock enough for them, "for the earth is the Lord's and the fulneſs thereof." And he is "the God of the faithful and of their ſeed." Is he ſo? then let us labour to leave our children in covenant, leave them in a gracious frame and ſtate of ſoul, that they may be God's children, and then we leave them rich: for we leave them God all-ſufficient to be their portion.—Therefore thoſe that pretend, I do this for my poſterity and children, when they are unjuſt and unconſcionable in their getting: they make this defence for their unbelief; if they had true faith, as they truſt God with their ſouls (as they pretend at leaſt) ſo they would with their children and poſterity.

8. Again, he that truſts God truly, will truſt God with his gifts, with the diſtribution of his alms, with parting with that he hath for the preſent, when he ſees it like ſeed caſt upon the water. When ſeed is caſt upon the water, we are like never to ſee it again. Oh but ſaith the wiſe man, "Caſt thy bread upon the water, and thou ſhall ſee it after a certain time." He that hath learned to truſt God will believe this; though he caſt away his bounty, yet he hath caſt it upon God, and Chriſt, who will return it again: he knows he doth but lend it to the Lord. Therefore thoſe that think their bounty, and alms, and good deeds, to be loſt, becauſe they ſee not a preſent return, a preſent crop of that ſeed, they have not a ſpirit of truſt in God: for he that hath will endeavour to be "rich in good works:" nay, he will account it a ſpecial favour, a greater favour, to have a heart to do good, than to have means. A reprobate may have means in abundance to do good, but only a child of God hath a heart to do good, and when he had gotten a large and gracious heart to do good, it pleaſeth him; then he ſees he has an evidence that he is the child of God, he knows he ſhall not loſe

loſe a cup of cold water, not the leaſt thing that he doth in the name of Chriſt. The apprehenſion of this ſhould make us more fruitful, and "abound in the work of the Lord." It is for want of truſt and faith, that we are ſo barren as we are in good works.

9. Again, he that will truſt God with the greateſt matters, will truſt God with his ways for direction: he will not truſt his own wit and wiſdom, but God; God ſhall be wiſe for him, he will follow God's directions, and whatſoever is contrary to God's direction he will not do: he will acknowledge God in all his ways, Prov. iii. 5. "Acknowledge God in all thy ways," acknowledge him to be thy guide, thy defender, thy light, to direct thee: acknowledge him to be able and willing to give ſucceſs, acknowledge God in all thy ways and conſultations; and when we have eſpecially any great matters in hand, Oh I beſeech you let us learn to acknowledge God. What is it to acknowledge him? To go to him for direction and protection in doing our duty, that we ſeek to him for ſtrength and for ſucceſs, this is to acknowledge God in our ways. What makes men ſo unfortunate and ſucceſsleſs in their conſultations? Becauſe they are ſo faithleſs, they do not acknowledge God in their ways, but truſt too much to ſeeming things, and appearance of things, they are carried too much with that. Though things ſeem to go never ſo well, yet let nothing make us give over to acknowledge God: nay, when things are never ſo ill, let us acknowledge God, for God can ſet all ſtraight and at rights again. Alas! what a ſmall matter is it for him that rules heaven and earth, and turns the great wheel of all things, to turn the leſſer wheels, to order leſſer buſineſſes, and bring them to a happy iſſue and concluſion? It is but a little matter with his command, ſeeing he rules all things; it is but truſting in him, and praying to him, and then uſing the means with dependence upon him. Let us therefore acknowledge God this way by committing our ways and affairs to him. We need knowledge, and ſtrength, and a comfortable iſſue, for all that is neceſſary in our affairs; let us acknowledge God, and fetch all theſe from him.

10. Well, the laſt thing that we have any uſe of truſting God withal is, when we are dying, to truſt our ſouls, to commit them to God, and yield them up to him, our "depoſitum," to lay it with him. He that inured himſelf to truſt God all his

life, and to live by faith, he will be able at length with ſome comfort to die by faith. He that hath truſted God all his life, with all things that God hath truſted him, he can eaſily truſt God with his ſoul; and he that hath not inured himſelf to truſt God in this life, undoubtedly he will never truſt God with his ſoul when he dies, it is but a forced truſt.

Thus you ſee in all the paſſages of our lives we muſt learn to truſt God, and to make uſe of God: for God is ſo abundant, that he is never drawn dry; he joys when he is made uſe of, it is an honour to him. Let us try ourſelves, by what I have ſaid, whether we truly truſt God or no; let us not deceive our ſouls, but labour to truſt God for all things. Let it be our daily practice in the uſe of means to look to the courſe which he preſcribes, and then look up to him for ſtrength, and bleſſing, and ſucceſs. This ought to be the life of a Chriſtian; as they ſay of the governor of a ſhip, he hath his hand to the ſtern, and his eye to the pole-ſtar, to be directed by that: ſo the life of a Chriſtian, he muſt be doing that which God preſcribes him: and he muſt have his eye to the ſtar, to be guided in his courſe by God's direction: he that doth not this, knows not what it is to truſt in God.

How ſhall we bring our ſouls to this ſo neceſſary a duty? Indeed it is a very hard matter; we know what it is to live by our wits, by our wealth, by our lands; but what it is to live by faith in depending upon God, few ſouls are acquainted with that.

Therefore in the firſt place, learn to know God; you ſee here we muſt truſt in his name. We know men by their names, God and his name are all one, his name is himſelf, and himſelf is his name. Therefore let us learn to know God as he hath diſcovered himſelf; know him in his works, but eſpecially in his word, know him by that work as he hath diſcovered himſelf in his word. Let us know his promiſes, and have them in ſtore for all things; promiſes for grace, and for direction in this world. God will not "fail us nor forſake us," he will be in all extremities with us, "in the fire and in the water;" and the promiſes of iſſue, "all things ſhall work for good to them that ove God." Then the promiſe of his ſpirit, "He will give his holy ſpirit to them that aſk him:" Beſides particular promiſes, a world of them in Scripture, let us know God in theſe pro-

promiſes, they are our inheritance, our portion. And if we ſhould go to God, and not be acquainted with theſe, he will aſk us upon what ground? How ſhall we be able to go to God? But when we have his promiſe, we may ſay boldly with the Pſalmiſt, "Lord, remember thy promiſe wherein thou haſt cauſed thy ſervant to truſt." We may put God in remembrance, not that he forgets, but he will have us mindful of what he promiſeth, and put him in mind. And it is an evidence to our ſouls that he will grant any thing, when we have faith to put him in mind of his promiſe, "Lord, remember thy promiſe wherein thou haſt cauſed thy ſervant to truſt." Lord, thou canſt not deny thy word, and thy truth, and thyſelf, and thy promiſe, and thy name by which thou haſt made thyſelf known. Thus we ſhould know God in his word, as it is Pſal. xi. "They that know thy name, will truſt in thee, O Lord." We never truſt a man till we know him; and thoſe that are not good, we ſay, "they are better known than truſted;" but the more we know God, the more we ſhall truſt him.

And know him in his ſpecial attributes that the word ſets him out in, beſides the promiſes, that we may know that he is able to make good all theſe promiſes, and then we ſhall truſt him. What are thoſe attributes? He hath made himſelf known to be all-ſufficient, what a world of comfort is in that? He ſaith to Abraham, "I am God all-ſufficient, walk before me and be perfect;" take thou no thought for any other thing, I am God all-ſufficient. There is in him whatſoever may be for an object of truſt, he is all ſufficient, he hath power, "our truſt is in the name of the Lord, that made heaven and earth." There is a conſideration to ſtrengthen faith, there is power enough, we believe in a God that made heaven and earth: and there is will to help us, he is our God; and there is ſkill to help us, as St. Peter ſaith, "he knows how to deliver," it is his practice, he hath uſed it from the beginning of the church, and will to the end; he knows how to deliver them, to protect and ſtand by them, he hath power, and will, and ſkill to do it. And then again he is everywhere, he is ſuch a caſtle, and tower, and defence; we have him near us at all times, he is a "preſent help in trouble," as it is Pſal. xlvi. what an object of truſt is here, if we had but faith to make uſe of it? Let us therefore know God in his word, in his attributes, and this will be a means to ſtrengthen truſt, as it is Pſal. xxxvi. "How ſweet is thy good-

neſs? therefore ſhall the ſons of men truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings." Why come we under the ſhadow of God's wings? Becauſe his goodneſs is ſweet, he is a fit object for truſt. The things of this world the more we know them, the leſs we truſt them, for they are but vain; but there is ſuch infiniteneſs in God, that the more we know him, the more we ſhall truſt him; therefore let us grow in the knowledge of God's word and truth.

And add experimental knowledge, it helps truſt marvellouſly; the experience of others, and our own experience: when we ſee God hath helped his church in all times, eſpecially when they have ſought him by faſting and prayer, "Our fathers truſted in thee, and were not confounded," Pſal. xxii. Therefore if we truſt in thee, we ſhall not be confounded. So for our own experience. "Thou haſt been my God from my mother's womb, I have depended upon thee from my mother's breaſt; forſake me not in mine old years, in my grey hairs when my ſtrength faileth me." Pſal. lxxi. Thus we may gather upon God from former experience, that God will not now forſake us: becauſe we have had experience of his kindneſs in former times; he hath been my God from my childhood, therefore he will be now. This is a good argument; becauſe God is as he was, he is the ſame, he is never drawn dry, "Where he loves, he loves to the end." Where he begins, he will end; therefore this ſhould ſtrengthen our faith, to gather experience from former things. Thus David alledgeth the lion and the bear, and ſo St. Paul, "he hath delivered me, therefore he will deliver me." It is ordinary with the ſaints of God.

2. Again, if we would truſt in God, labour every day to be acquainted with God in daily prayer, in hearing, and reading, and meditation. We truſt friends with whom we are much acquainted; and thoſe that are not acquainted with God, in that communion that belongs to Chriſtians, that do not often talk with God by prayer and meditation, when they go to God in extremity, what will God ſay to them? Upon what acquaintance? You are ſtrangers to me, and I will be a ſtranger to you; and wiſdom itſelf "will laugh at their deſtruction," Prov. i. when they will force acquaintance upon God when they have uſe of him, and never care for him in the time of peace. Therefore if we would truſt God and go to God boldly; as who is there here that will not have need of him? We have need of

him

him continually; but ſometimes more than others; therefore I ſay, let us be acquainted with him, that we may after truſt him. Thoſe that have not the care to be acquainted with God, either they have not the heart to go to God, or if they have, they have but a cold anſwer: but indeed for the moſt part, they have no heart to go to God, for their hearts miſgive them, and tell them they have been careleſs of God, they have neglected God, therefore God will not regard them; "Go to the gods ye have truſted," as it is Judges x. Anſwerable to our care, beloved, in the time of peace, will our comfort be when we are in trouble. Therefore I beſeech you let us remember this as means to ſtrengthen our truſt, our acquaintance with God: and acquaint ourſelves ſo with him, as to keep him our friend, not to offend him; for if we offend him, we ſhall not truſt him. A galled conſcience is afraid of God, as a ſore eye is of light. A comfortable conſcience is from a conſcience to pleaſe God. "This is our boldneſs and confidence," ſaith Paul, that we have laboured to "keep a good conſcience," that we may have him our friend.

3. Again, let us labour to exerciſe our truſt upon all occaſions: for things that are exerciſed are the brighter and the ſtronger. Let us inure ourſelves to truſt in God for all things, and to truſt him with all things, with our bodies, with our ſouls, with our eſtates, with our children, with our ways, with our good name, with our credit and reputation, with all, as I ſaid before in the ſigns of truſt. Faith grows in the exerciſe, as we ſee Pſal. lxii. A pſalm expreſſing David's truſt in God, and the conflict with his ſoul in truſting, he begins, "yet my ſoul waits upon the Lord," &c.; and in verſe 2. "I ſhall not be greatly moved," ſaith he, but when he had gone on, and exerciſed his faith ſtill, then he ſaith in verſe 6, "He is my rock, and my Saviour, and defence, I ſhall not be moved." He that at the beginning ſaith, "I ſhall not greatly be moved," afterward working upon his heart and ſoul, and exerciſing his faith, ſaith, "I ſhall not be moved, he is my rock my ſaviour, and defence." Faith is the engine by which we do all by which we prevail with God, and overcome the world, and all the ſnares on the right hand, and on the left, it is that whereby we do all: therefore we had need to keep it in exerciſe, and inure it, that we may have it to manage and uſe upon all occaſions. It is not enough to have faith in us, but we muſt live by it, it

muſt not only live in us, but we muſt live by it: this is another way to ſtrengthen this faith, and aſſurance, and truſting in God.

4. The next is to practiſe that which I ſpoke of formerly. to grow poor in ſpirit, "for they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord." Let us labour more and more to ſee our own wants. A Chriſtian ſhould have a double eye, one to look to himſelf and his own wants, to be abaſed, another eye to God's promiſe, to God's nature to truſt in God; and thus we ſhould paſs our days; the more we can empty ourſelves, the more we ſhall be filled with God. We ſee here in the text the way to truſt in God, to be poor in ſpirit. The reaſon is in nature; whoſoever is not poor in himſelf and ſees a neceſſity, he will never go out of himſelf, for he hath ſome other ſupply. Therefore if we would learn to truſt in God, we muſt learn to empty ourſelves of all ſelf-confidence, by obſerving our weakneſs and wants, by taking notice, not ſo much of our graces, as of our wants. When Moſes came from the mount his face ſhone: he knew not of it, all the world about him knew it beſides himſelf; but he obſerved it not, ſaith the ſcripture: ſo when a Chriſtian conſiders not (ſpecially in temptations to pride) what he hath, but what he wants, how little good he hath done, how many evil thoughts and actions have paſſed from him, how ſhort he is in fruitfulneſs and thankfulneſs to God; this is the way to truſt in God: for then we will keep cloſe to God, when we do ſee our own weakneſs.

5. And let us labour to have a ſpirit of ſanctification, to have our ſouls more and more renewed to truſt in God, or elſe all other courſes are nothing: for when it comes to particulars, if the ſoul be not ſanctified, there is no correſpondence and harmony between it and God. How can an unſanctified ſoul cloſe with a holy God? Therefore we muſt labour to be good, and to do good, as the apoſtle Peter ſaith, "To commit our ſouls to God in doing good." Let us labour to be good, to get grace, and then there will be a harmony, a union of natures between a holy God, and a holy ſoul, and then we ſhall truſt, and rely upon him eaſily. Where there is not grace in the heart ſubduing corruptions, when it comes to particulars, whether to truſt in God or man; then the ſoul will rebel and ſcorn as it were truſting in God: it will go to wits, to friends, to favours, and other helps.

Let

Let a man be never ſuch a ſcholar, of never ſo great parts; when he comes to any ſhift, if he have not grace in him, he will diſdain out of pride of ſpirit (as every man naturally is deeply proud) to rely upon conſcience, and upon the truth and promiſes of the word and upon ſuch terms; theſe be weak things, no, he will ſtir hell rather, and earth, and all means; he accounts it greatneſs that he can do ſo. It is only the holy man that will cleave faſt to God, and to his truth and word, for he reliſheth it: the ſpirit that penned the Scriptures and the promiſes, it rules in his heart, and therefore he reliſheth them: O theſe promiſes are ſweet! And as he can truſt the promiſes, ſo he can truſt God, becauſe (as I ſaid before) he is acquainted with him. Where there is not a gracious heart, there will never be a believing truſting heart.

6. There is in God infiniteneſs of ways of ſupply, let us labour therefore for a prudent heart, to learn the ſkill of fetching out of God for all neceſſities. As our want is, ſo let us fetch ſupply from ſome attribute of God, and ſome promiſe anſwerable. This is the wiſdom of the ſaints of God. Are we in extremity? then with Jehoſhaphat ſay, "We know not, Lord, what to do, but our eyes are toward thee." Are we perplexed that we want wiſdom: then go to God who is infinitely wiſe; conſider him ſo, for he is fit for the ſoul, nay, he exceeds all the maladies and wants of the ſoul: there is not only abundance in God, but redundance and overflowing abundance: therefore there wants but ſkill to make uſe of what is in him for our turn. Are we wronged? go to God that "judgeth righteouſly," conſider him in that relation, as a God "to whom vengeance belongeth." Are we overpowered? Go to God "that made heaven and earth, ſo the Almighty God. Are we troubled with the ſenſe of ſin? Go to God that is "the father of all mercy, and God of all comfort." Are we caſt down and no man regards us? Go to God that ſtiles himſelf "the comforter of the abject." This is the ſkill that faith learns, not only in groſs to think of God, but to think of God anſwerable to all occaſions; as indeed there is ſomewhat in God to ſatisfy the ſoul in all extremities whatſoever. I beſeech you let us learn to do this.—What a happy condition is he in, that hath learned to inure his ſoul to truſt in God, for the removal of all ill, and for the obtaining of all good, he is ſure of all. "For God is a ſun and a ſhield," a ſun for all that is good, and a ſhield to defend us, from

from all ill: he is ſo to all that truſt in him, he is a "buckler, and an exceeding great reward," he is a buckler to ward and ſhield ill from us, and an exceeding great reward for all that is good: therefore in how happy a condition is the ſoul that is acquainted with this bleſſed exerciſe of truſting and believing in God? It is a ſtate wherein we ſhall be kept from all ill. I mean from the ill of ills, not from the ill of ſenſe, but from the ill of ills, and from the poiſon of all ill. Whatſoever ill we endure, there ſhall be comfort mixed with it, and it is better to have it, than the comfort; what a comfort is this? "They that truſt in the Lord, ſhall want nothing that is good. He that truſts in the Lord, is as a tree planted by the river ſide," Jer xvii. He ſhall alway have his leaf flouriſhing, and bear fruit, becauſe he is at the well head. He that hath the ſpring can never want water; and he that is in the ſun can never want light; he that is at the great feaſt can never want proviſion; he that hath learned to truſt in God, and can improve what is in him, what can he want? O it is the ſcarceneſs of our faith that we want comfort; as our faith is, ſo is our comfort, and if we could bring a thouſand times more faith to graſp the promiſes, we ſhould carry away more comfort and ſtrength.

DIVINE

DIVINE MEDITATIONS,

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

1. EVERY man hath made good progress in religion, that hath an high esteem of the ordinances of God; and tho' sometimes he may find himself dull, yet the best things have left such a relish in his soul, that he cannot be long without them. Oh this is a true sign of a good temper of mind!

2. A woman, when she marries a husband, gives up her will to him: so doth every Christian when he is married to Christ; he gives up his will, and all that he hath, and saith, Lord, I have nothing, but if thou callest for it, thou shalt have it again.

3. When we come to be religious, we lose not our pleasure, but translate it; perhaps before we fed upon common or profane notions, now we live upon holy truths. A Christian never knows what comfort is, till he says with Austin, "Lord, I have long wanted the true manna, all my former food was nothing but empty husks."

4. God takes special care of weak Christians, that are struggling with temptations and corruptions; Christ carries them in his arms. All Christ's sheep are diseased, therefore he will shew a tender care of them, Is. xl. 11.

5. Whatsoever is good for God's children, they shall have it, for all is theirs to help them towards heaven; therefore if poverty be good, they shall have it; if disgrace, if crosses be good, they shall have them; for all is ours, to promote our greatest prosperity.

6. God's

6. God's children have theſe outward things with God himſelf, they are conduits to convey his favour; and the ſame love that moved God to give us heaven and eternal happineſs, alſo leads him to give us our daily bread.

7. The whole life of a Chriſtian ſhould be nothing but praiſes to God; we ſhould neither eat, nor drink, nor ſleep, but eat, and ſleep, and work, and talk, as doing all to God's glory and praiſe.

8. Though God deliver us not out of trouble, yet he delivers us from its evil; from deſpair, by ſupporting our ſpirits; nay, he delivers by trouble, for he ſanctifies trials to cure the ſoul, and by little troubles he delivers us from thoſe that are much greater and eternal.

9. What are we but a model of God's favours, what do we ſee, or taſte, but the mercy of God; the miſeries of others ſhould be matter of praiſe, even the ſins of others ſhould make us praiſe God; and ſay, "Lord, ſuch might have been my caſe, it might have befallen me."

10. God pities our weakneſs in all troubles and afflictions; he will not ſtay too long, leſt we put forth our hands to evil; he will not ſuffer the rod of the wicked to reſt upon the lot of the righteous, Pſal. cxxv. 3.

11. Is it not an unreaſonable ſpeech for a man, at midnight to ſay, "It will never be day?" It is as unreaſonable for a man in trouble to ſay, "O Lord, I ſhall never get free, it will always be thus, and never end."

12. Do the wicked think to ſhame or intimidate good men? No, a ſpirit of grace and glory ſhall reſt upon them; they ſhall not only have a ſpirit of grace reſt upon them, but a ſpirit of glory; ſo that their countenances ſhall ſhine as Stephen's did, Acts vi. 15.

13. If God hides his face, what ſhall become of our ſouls? we are like the poor flower that opens and ſhuts with the ſun. If God ſhines upon the heart, it opens; but if he withdraws himſelf, we hang down our heads: "Thou didſt hide they face, and I was troubled," Pſal. xxx. 7.

14. When we have given up ourſelves to God, let us comfort our ſouls, that God is our God: when riches, and men, and our lives fail; yet God is ours; we are now God's Davids, and God's

God's Pauls," and God's Abrahams, we have an everlasting being in him, (as one with Christ.)

15. A special cause of too much dejection, is want of resolution in good things; then we halt in religion; as halting is a deformed and troublesome gesture, so is religion; halting is always joined with trouble.

16. God hath made the poorest man governor of himself; and hath set judgment to rule against passion, and conscience against sin; therefore reason should never be a slave to our passions.

17. It is the peculiar wisdom of a Christian to pick arguments out of his worst condition, to make him thankful to God; and if thankful, he will be joyful, and so long as he is joyful, he cannot be miserable, but must be happy.

18. God hath, in Christ, made himself ours, it is no presumption then to challenge him to be our God, when once we have interest in God, he thinks nothing too good for us, he is not satisfied in giving us the blessings of this life, but he gives himself to be our portion for ever.

19. As we receive all from God, so we should lay all at his feet, and say, shall I live in a course of sin? that will not stand with the favour of my God; he will not lodge in the heart that hath any purpose to transgress.

20. God's people have sweet intercourse with him even in their callings; when we look for comfort, we shall find it, either in ordinances, hearing, reading, or praying, &c. or else in our common employments.

21. We glorify God when we exalt him in our souls above all creatures in the world; when we give him the highest place in our love, and our joy; when all our affections are set upon him as our greatest good. This is seen also by opposition, when we ask our affections, "Whom have I in heaven," or on earth, "but thee?"

22. True zeal for God's glory, is joined with true love to men: therefore all that are violent, injurious, and insolent, never talk of glorifying God, so long as they despise the meanest of men.

23. If we do not find ourselves to be the people of God's delight,

light, let us attend upon the means of ſalvation, and wait God's good time. Do not ſtand diſputing, "Perhaps God hath not a purpoſe to ſave me;" but, zealous in obedience, caſt thyſelf into the arms of Chriſt, and ſay, "If I periſh, I will periſh here"

24. The love of God in Chriſt is not in word only; it is love that reaches from everlaſting to everlaſting, love ſhewn in chooſing, and in glorifying us. In all the miſeries of the world, one beam of the loving kindneſs of the Lord will ſcatter all, and fill my heart with joy.

25. Our deſires are holy, if exerciſed about ſpiritual things. David deſires not to be rich, or to have power to be revenged upon his enemies; but prays to dwell in the houſe of the Lord, and enjoy his ordinances there, Pſal. xxvii. 4.

26. Deſires ſhew the frame of the ſoul more than any thing. As a ſpring diſcovers itſelf by vapours that ariſe; ſo theſe riſing deſires ſhew that there is a ſpring of grace in our hearts.

27. Deſires ſpring from the will, and the will being, as it were, the whole man, it moves all other powers to do their duty, and ſeek for the accompliſhment of what is deſired. Thoſe therefore that pretend to good deſires, yet neglect all means, and live ſcandalouſly, only have the deſire of the ſlothful, that killeth him, Prov. xxi. 25.

28. An hypocrite will not pray always, but a child of God never gives over; becauſe he ſees an excellency, a neceſſity, and a poſſibility of obtaining what he deſires; he hath a promiſe, "The Lord will fulfil the deſires of them that fear him," Pſal. cxlv. 19.

29. Prayer exerciſes all the graces of the ſpirit; we cannot truly pray, but faith is exerciſed, our love, and patience, which make us ſet a high price upon that we ſeek after, and to uſe it well.

30. God takes it unkindly if we weep too much for the loſs of a wife, child, or friend, or for any croſs in the things of this life; for it is a ſign we fetch not that comfort from him, which we ſhould and may do: nay, though our weeping be for our ſins, we muſt keep moderation; with one eye look upon our ſins, and with the other, look to God's mercy in Chriſt; there-

fore

fore if the beſt grief muſt be moderated, how much more ſhould the other?

31. The religious affections of God's people are mixed: they mingle their joy with weeping, and their tears with joy; whereas a carnal man's are all ſimple, if he rejoices he is mad, if ſorrowful (unleſs reſtrained) he ſinks. Grace always tempers both the joy and ſorrow of a Chriſtian; becauſe he hath always ſomething to rejoice in, and ſomething for which to grieve. O then, let me look to heaven for the fulneſs of joy.

32. We are members of two worlds; while we live here, we muſt uſe this world; how many things doth this poor body need? in our paſſage we muſt have neceſſaries, but yet ſhould uſe the world as if we uſed it not; for there is great danger, leſt our affections cleave to things of this preſent life, and we forget heaven, our home.

33. It is a meanneſs of ſpirit in a Chriſtian to be over-joyful, or over-grieved for things worſe than ourſelves; if a man hath any grace, all the world is inferior to him: therefore what poorneſs of ſpirit is it to be over-joyful, or over much grieved, when all things are fading, and vaniſh ſo ſoon away? Oh! let it therefore be continually on our minds, that all things here below are ſubordinate to the upper world.

34. A ſincere heart that is burdened with ſin, deſires not heaven, ſo much to leave pain, as becauſe that is the place where he ſhall be free from ſin, and have the image of God and Chriſt perfected in his ſoul: therefore a ſincere ſpirit comes under the word, not ſo much becauſe an eloquent man preacheth, as to hear divine truths; for the power of the ſpirit goes with them to carry on his own work. You cannot ſtill a child with any thing but the breaſt, ſo you cannot ſatisfy the deſires of a Chriſtian but with divine truths, as it is Iſaiah xxvi 8. "The deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee."

35. There are a thouſand things that hinder good ſucceſs in our affairs. What man can apply all things to a fit iſſue, and remove all that may hinder it? Who can obſerve perſons, times, places, advantages, and diſadvantages? and when we ſee theſe things, that is naturally a paſſion, hope or fear, that robs us of our knowledge; as when a man ſees any danger, there is ſuch a fear, or anger, that he is in a miſt. So that unleſs God gives par-

particular ſucceſs, there is none. As it is in the frame of a man's body, that ſtands upon many joints, if any one be out of order, that hinders all the reſt.

36. If we wiſh to perſevere, as deep apprehenſion of our miſeries by nature is neceſſary, let us labour to have our hearts broken more and more for ſin. By this fault the ſtony ground-hearers, ſpoken of in the goſpel, wanted fertility: therefore it is Chriſtian policy to ſuffer our ſouls to be humbled as deep as poſſible, that there may be mould enough; otherwiſe there may be great joy in hearing divine truths, but all will be ſucked up like dew, under perſecution, and the word become unfruitful.

37. What is the reaſon that God's children ſink not to hell under their troubles! Becauſe they have God's inward preſence ſtrengthening them; for the Holy Ghoſt helps our infirmities: and not only aſſiſts us to pray, but to bear croſſes, by lightening them with ſome views of God's gracious countenance.—Nothing can ſupport our faith, but inward ſtrength from God.

38. In proſperity, or after ſome deliverance, it is the fitteſt time for praiſe, becauſe then our ſpirits are raiſed and cheared by the evidence of God's favour, the greater the croſs, from which we have been delivered, the more will our hearts be enlarged to praiſe the Lord.

39. When we receive any good, either for body or ſoul, whoever is the inſtrument, let us look to the principal; as in the gifts we receive, we look not to him who brings, but to him who ſent them.

40. Take heed of ſatan's policy; ſay not, God hath forgotten me, becauſe I am in extremity; nay, rather ſay, ſurely God will ſoon ſhow mercy, now is the ſpecial time of mercy. Let me always repel ſatan with his own weapons.

41. Whatſoever God takes from his children, he either ſupplies with a much greater favour, or elſe with ſtrength to bear the loſs. Hath God given charge to others, to take care of the fatherleſs and widow, and will he neglect them himſelf?

42. That is ſpiritual knowledge, which alters the reliſh of the ſoul; for we muſt know there is a bitter oppoſition in our nature, againſt all ſaving truths; eſpecially there is a contrariety between our nature, and that doctrine which teaches us, we muſt deny

deny ourſelves, and be ſaved by another. The ſoul muſt firſt be brought to reliſh, before it can digeſt; there muſt be firſt an holy harmony between our nature and divine truth, revealed in the goſpel.

43. That we may walk right in God's ways, let us have heaven daily in our eye, and the day of judgment. So faith will ſteer the courſe of our lives, and breed love in the uſe of the means, and patience under all conditions; Oh! let us keep our eye, with Moſes, upon him that is inviſible.

44. A man may know that he loves the world, if he be more careful to get than to uſe it: we are but ſtewards; and every one ſhould conſider, I muſt be as careful in diſtributing, as in getting riches; for when a perſon is all in getting, and nothing in diſtributing, this man is a worldling; though moderate in getting wealth without wrong to any man, the world hath gotten his heart, he makes not that uſe of it he ſhould.

45. It is as fooliſh a conceit to think, that we can fit ourſelves for grace, as that a child in the womb could forward its natural birth: if God hath made us men, let us not make ourſelves gods; it is God, &c. Phil. ii. 13.

46. As natural life preſerves itſelf by repelling that which is contrary to it; ſo where the life of grace is, there is a growing principle of deſire, of ſkill, and of power, to ſubdue every ſin.

47. It is in the nature of the ſoul, when it ſees a ſucceſſion of better things, this world ſeems mean; when it ſees another happy condition, not liable to change, it hath a ſanctified judgment to eſteem things as they are, and ſo by faith overcomes the world.

48. In the new covenant, God intends the glory of his grace above all. Now faith is fit for it, becauſe it hath an uniting virtue to knit us to the Mediator, and lay hold on a thing out of ourſelves; it empties the ſoul of all conceit of its own worth, and of the ſtrength and excellence of every creature, and ſo gives all the glory of ſalvation to God through Jeſus Chriſt.

49. What we are afraid to ſpeak before men, and to do for fear of danger, let us much more be afraid to think before God; therefore we ſhould ſtifle all evil thoughts in the very

riſing: let them be uſed as rebels and traitors, be ſubdued at firſt.

50. The heart, till a man becometh a believer, is in a wavering condition, never quiet; the happineſs of the creature is to be ſatisfied, and have reſt; for perplexity makes every one miſerable. If a man has but a little ſcruple in his conſcience, he is like a ſhip toſſed by contrary winds, and cannot get to the deſired haven.

51. The righteouſneſs of works leaves the ſoul in perplexity; that righteouſneſs which comes by any other means than by Chriſt, leaves the ſoul unſettled; becauſe the law of God promiſes life only upon abſolute and perſonal performance. Now the heart of man tells him, theſe evils he hath done, and ſuch and ſuch duties omitted; and guilt breeds perplexity, becauſe he hath no ſupport.

52. Glory follows afflictions, not as the day follows night, but as the ſpring follows winter: winter prepares the earth for ſpring, ſo do afflictions, ſanctified, prepare the ſoul for glory.

53. This life is not chiefly for the body, but for the ſoul; and therefore the ſoul ſays to it, "If thou prevaileſt over me to fulfil thy deſires, thou wilt loſe me and thyſelf for ever." But if the body be given up to Chriſt, the ſoul will plead for it in heaven; "Lord, that body in yonder world, did faſt for me, and pray with me!" it will plead (as Pharoah's butler for Joſeph) to the King of Kings.

54. Afflictions make a divorce between the ſoul and ſin: it is not a ſmall thing that will work ſin out of the ſoul, it muſt be the ſpirit of burning, the fire of afflictions ſanctified; heaven is for holineſs, and all that is contrary to holineſs, affliction works out, and ſo fits the ſoul for further and perfect communion with God.

55. When the ſoul admires ſpiritual things, it is in a holy frame, and ſo long it will not ſtoop to carnal comforts. O let me labour to keep my heart in a ſtate of holy admiration from day to day.

56. Unto all thoſe whom Chriſt ſaves by his merit, he diſcovers their wretched condition, and a better to be obtained: he ſhews us by whom we are redeemed, and from what, and unto what

what condition; the ſpirit informing us thoroughly, that God enters into covenant with us through Jeſus Chriſt.

57. Spiritual duties are as oppoſite to fleſh and blood, as fire to water; but as ointment makes the members nimble and ſtrong; ſo where the ſpirit of God is in any man, it makes him nimble and ſtrong, and chearful to all good duties: but when we are drawn to them as a bear to the ſtake, for fear or by natural cuſtom; this is not from the ſpirit, for by the ſpirit our duties are performed without force, or fear, or vain hope. A child needs no extrinſical motion to make him pleaſe his father, becauſe love is inbred and natural to him.

58. The weights of a clock move all the wheels, ſo artificial Chriſtians are excited by things without them; for they want an inward principle to do good freely; but the ſpirit of God works a kind of natural freedom.

59. As a woman under the law of Moſes, when forced by any man, if ſhe cried out, was then blameleſs; ſo if we unfeignedly cry to Chriſt, and complain of our corruptions, as too ſtrong for us, this prayer will witneſs to our hearts that we are not hypocrites.

60. Good duties come from unſound chriſtians as fire out of a flint; but they flow from a child of God, as the waters of a ſpring: yet becauſe there is fleſh, as well as ſpirit, therefore every duty muſt be gotten (as it were) out of the fire. And yet alſo there is an holy liberty, becauſe there is a principle that reſiſts the fleſh.

61. God's children are hindered in all good duties by an inevitable weakneſs in nature, as the body after labour by drowſineſs; therefore the ſpirit may be willing when the fleſh is weak. If we truly ſtrive againſt this dullneſs, Chriſt is always ready to make excuſe for us, as he did for his diſciples, Mat. xxvi. 41.

62. A child of God is the greateſt freeman, and the beſt ſervant, even as Chriſt himſelf was the beſt ſervant, yet none ſo free; and the greater portion any man hath of his, the freer diſpoſition he hath for Chriſt's ſake to ſerve every one in love.

63. Sight is the nobleſt ſenſe, it is quick. We can look from earth to heaven in a moment; it is large, we can ſee the hemiſ-

phere of the heavens at one view; it is ſure and certain; in hearing we may be deceived: and laſtly, it is the moſt affecting ſenſe; even ſo faith is the quickeſt, the largeſt, the moſt certain, the moſt affecting grace: like an eagle in the clouds, at one view it ſees Chriſt in heaven, and looks down upon the world; it looks backwards and forwards, it ſees things paſt, preſent, and to come; therefore this grace is ſaid, 2 Cor. iv. 18. to behold things unſeen and eternal.

64. A veil had two uſes amongſt the Jews, one was ſubjection, and therefore the women were veiled; another was obſcurity, and therefore the veil was put on Moſes' face. Both theſe are now taken away in Chriſt; for we ſerve God, as ſons a father, and as a ſpouſe her huſband; we are ſtill in ſubjection, but it is not ſervile; and now alſo with open face, ſeeing the glory of the Lord, we behold the things themſelves, as clearly laid open, the veil being taken away.

65. Our happineſs conſiſts in due ſubordination and conformity to Chriſt; therefore let us labour to carry ourſelves as he did, to his Father, to his friends, to his enemies. In the days of his fleſh, he prayed whole nights to his Father. How holy and heavenly minded! he took occaſion from vines, and ſtones, and ſheep, for heavenly diſcourſe; and when he roſe from the dead, he ſpake only of things concerning the kingdom of God. As for his carriage towards his friends, "He would not quench the ſmoaking flax, nor break the bruiſed reed:" he did not reproach Peter with his denial; but was of a winning diſpoſition to all: and as for his carriage to his enemies, he did not call for fire from heaven to deſtroy them, but dropped many tears for thoſe that ſhed his blood, "O Jeruſalem," &c. and upon the croſs, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:" ſo that to be like minded to Chriſt, conſider how he carried himſelf to his Father, to his friends, to his enemies, yea to the devil himſelf. Even when he comes to us in wife, children, friends, &c. we muſt, as Chriſt did, ſay to Satan, get thee hence; and when we deal with thoſe that have the ſpirit of the devil in them, we muſt not render reproach for reproach, but anſwer them, "It is written."

66. When we find any grace wrought in us, we ſhould have an holy eſteem of ourſelves; and ſay, when we are tempted to ſin, What! I that am an heir of heaven, a king, a conqueror,

a ſon of God, ſhall I debaſe myſelf? God has put a crown upon my ſoul, and ſhall I caſt my crown in the mire? no, I will be more honourable. Theſe are no proud thoughts, but ſuitable to our ſtate.

67. Thoſe that have eyes dazzled with the falſe luſtre of the world, want ſpiritual light: Chriſt himſelf, when here upon earth, lived a concealed life, only at certain times ſome beams of glory broke out. Let it comfort us that our glory is hid in Chriſt, though often clouded with the malice of wicked men, and with our own infirmities: but we are now, and ever ſhall be glorious in the eyes of God and his holy angels.

68. As children often after ſickneſs grow much; ſo God's children grow, eſpecially after their falls; ſometimes in humility, in patience, and other graces. Herbs and trees grow at the root in winter, in the leaf in the ſummer, and in the ſeed in autumn: ſo chriſtians at different ſeaſons grow in every grace.

69. That which we drew from the firſt Adam, was the diſpleaſure of God, but we draw from the ſecond Adam, the favour of God; from the firſt Adam comes corruption, from the ſecond, grace; from the firſt Adam we derive all miſeries, we draw from the ſecond Adam, life and happineſs; whatſoever we had from the firſt Adam, it is repaired more abundantly in the ſecond, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

70. Grace makes us glorious, becauſe it puts glory upon the ſoul; carries it above all earthly things; tramples the world under foot, and prevails againſt thoſe corruptions that foil ordinary men. A man is not more above the beaſts, than a chriſtian is above other men, but it doth not yet appear what hereafter he ſhall be.

71. It is an evidence that we are partakers of God's grace, if we can look upon the lives of others much better than ours, and love and eſteem them as glorious. A man may ſee grace in others with a malignant eye; for natural men are ſo vainglorious, that when they ſee the lives of other men outſhine theirs, inſtead of imitating they darken them; that grace they will not imitate, they defame: therefore, when perſons can ſee grace in others, and honour it in them, it is a ſign they have grace themſelves. Men can endure good in books, and hear

good things of men that are dead, but they cannot endure it in the lives of others, to be in their eyes, especially when they come to compare themselves with them, they do not like to be out-shined.

72. As the sun goes his course, though we cannot see it move; and as plants and herbs grow, though we cannot perceive them to grow: even so it follows not that a christian grows not, because he cannot see himself to grow; nay, if believers decay in their first love, or in some other grace, yet another grace may thrive, as their humility, their tenderness of conscience: sometimes they seem not to grow in the branches, when they grow at the root; after a check grace breaks out the more; as we say, after a hard winter, there generally follows a glorious spring.

73. God's children never hate corruption more, than when they have been overcome: the best men living have corruptions which they see not till they break out by temptations. When these corruptions are discovered, it stirs up our hatred, and hatred stirs up endeavour, and endeavour revenge; so that God's children should not even be discouraged by their falls; but, looking to Jesus, run the race set before them.

74. When true grace is wrought in a christian, his desires go beyond his strength, and his prayers are answerable to his desires. So, particularly, young christians often call their state in question, because they cannot bring heaven down upon earth; and cannot be perfect; but God will have us depend upon him for gradual increase of grace, by daily faith and expectation.

75. Christ is our pattern, whom we must strive to imitate; it was necessary that our pattern should be exact, that we might see our imperfections, and be humbled for them, and live by faith in Christ, for sanctification.

76. Consider Christ upon the cross, as a public person; when he was crucified, and when he died for sin, he died for my sins. This knowledge of Christ will be a crucifying knowledge, this will stir up my heart to use my corruptions, as my sins did Christ; as he hated sin, it will work the same disposition in me, to hate this body of death, and to use it as that treated Christ: if we see this clearly, it will conform us to Christ.

77. With our contemplations, let us join this kind of reasoning;

ſoning; Hath God ſo hated pride, that Chriſt was humbled to the death of the croſs to redeem me from it, and ſhall I be proud? When we are ſtirred up to revenge, let us conſider, that Chriſt prayed for his enemies: when tempted to diſobedience, think, God in my nature was obedient unto the death, and ſhall I rebel? and when we grow hard-hearted, conſider, Chriſt became man, that he might ſhew bowels of mercy: let us reaſon thus, when we are tempted, and it will be a means to tranſform us into the likeneſs of Chriſt.

78. When God is blaſphemed, or the like, let us think, how would Chriſt ſtand affected, if he were here? when he was here upon earth, how zealous was he againſt profaneneſs, and ſhall I be ſo cold? when he ſaw the multitude wander as ſheep without a ſhepherd, his bowels yearned; and ſhall we ſee ſo many poor ſouls live in darkneſs, and our bowels not yearn over them?

79. We muſt look upon Chriſt, not only as a phyſician, but as a perfect pattern for imitation. Wherefore did he live ſo long upon earth, but to ſhew us an example? and let us remember that we ſhall be accountable for thoſe good examples which we have from men; there is not an example of an humble, holy, and induſtrious life, but ſhall be laid to our charge; for God doth purpoſely ſet them before our eyes, that we might take their example, and be followers of the Lord.

80. As the ſpirits in the arteries quicken the blood in the veins, ſo the ſpirit of God goes along with the word, and makes it effectual. St Paul ſpeaks to Lydia's ear, but the ſpirit ſpeaks to her heart. As it was with Chriſt himſelf, ſo it is with his members. He was conceived, anointed, and ſealed by the ſpirit, and by the ſpirit he was raiſed from the dead: even ſo the members of Chriſt anſwer unto Chriſt himſelf; all is by the ſpirit; we are conceived by the ſpirit; the ſame ſpirit that ſanctified him, ſanctifies us: firſt, we receive the ſpirit by way of union, and then unction follows after; when we are united to Chriſt by the ſpirit, then He works the ſame in us, as he did in Chriſt.

81. When a proud wit, and ſupernatural truths meet together, a man will have ſomething of his own; therefore in reading and ſtudying of heavenly truths, eſpecially the goſpel, we muſt pray to God for his ſpirit, and not venture upon con-

ceit of our own parts, for God will curſe ſuch proud preſumption.

82. Many think that the knowledge of divine truths will make them divine; whereas it is the Holy Ghoſt only that gives a taſte and reliſh of them; for without the ſpirit, their hearts will riſe, when the word comes to each of them in particular, and tells them, you muſt deny yourſelf, and venture even life for the truth.

83. When men underſtand the ſcriptures, and yet are proud and malicious; we muſt not take ſcandal at it; for their hearts were never ſubdued, they underſtand ſupernatural things by human reaſon alone, and not by divine light.

84. Thoſe that meaſure lands, are very exact in every thing, but the poor man whoſe it is, knows the uſe of the ground better, and delights in it more, becauſe it is his own; ſo it is with miniſters, that can exactly ſpeak of heavenly truths, yet have no ſhare in them; but the poor ſoul that hears them, rejoiceth, and ſaith, theſe things are mine.

85. This life is a life of faith, for God will try the truth of our faith, that the world may ſee that God hath ſuch ſervants as will depend upon his bare word; it were nothing to be a chriſtian, if we ſhould ſee all here; but God will have his children live by faith, and take the promiſes upon his word.

86. The nature of hope is to expect that which faith believes; what could the joys of heaven avail us, if it were not for hope? it is the anchor of the ſoul, and being fixed in heaven, it ſtills the ſoul in all the troubles, combuſtions and confuſions we daily meet with in the preſent world.

87. It is too much curioſity to ſearch into particulars; as, what ſhall be the glory of the ſoul? and what ſhall be the glory of the body? rather ſtudy to make a good uſe of them, and in humility ſay, Lord, what is ſinful man, that thou ſhouldſt ſo advance him! The conſideration of this glory ſhould make us abaſe ourſelves, and in humility even now give thanks in hope, as Peter did, 1 Pet. i. 3. when he thought of an inheri-a nce incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not, he gave thanks, "Bleſſed be God the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us," &c.

88.

88. When we see men grow proud with the things of this life, let us in a holy kind of state think of our happiness in heaven, and carry ourselves accordingly. If we see any thing good in the world; let us say to our souls, this is not what I look for, or when we hear of any thing that is good, let us say, I can hear this, but desire the chief good; or when our knowledge increases of common things, this is not what I long for; but for things "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor that ever entered into the heart of man."

89. There are four things observable in the nature of love; first, an estimation of the party beloved; secondly, a desire to be joined to him; thirdly, a settled contentment; fourthly, a desire to please the party in all things: so there is first in every christian an high estimation of God in Christ; he makes choice of him above all things, and speaks largely in his commendation: secondly, he desires to be united to him, and where this desire is, there is an intercourse, he will open his mind to him by prayer, and go to him in all his consultations for counsel: thirdly, he places contentment in him alone, because in the worst condition he finds peace and comfort when the light of his countenance shines upon him: fourthly, he seeks to please him; he labours so to act, that God may in Christ delight in him; love stirs up his soul to remove all things distasteful to him. He asks, as David did, "Is there never a one left of the house of Saul, to whom I may do good for Jonathan's sake?" How can I honour my God?

90. Infirmities in God's children preserve their grace, therefore it is that in scripture, where God honours the saints, their weaknesses are made known: Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed, but he halted; Christ said to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build my church; yet, get thee behind me, Satan." Paul was exalted above measure with revelations; but he had the messenger of satan to buffet him; yet his prayer of faith prevailed.

91. It is the endeavour of an evil man to quench great good for a little ill; but Christ cherishes a little grace, though there be great corruption, though very offensive to him. Let me labour to gain to him all I can, by meekness and love.

92. Christians find their corruptions more offensive to them, than when they were in the state of nature; therefore it is, that they

they think their ſtate is not good; but corruption boils more, becauſe it is reſtrained.

93. The more of the will, the more heinous the ſin; when we venture upon ſinful courſes deliberately, it exceedingly waſtes our comfort: when we fall into ſin againſt conſcience, and abuſe our Chriſtian liberty, God fetches us back by ſome ſevere affliction; theſe ſhall be a cloud between God's face and us; and he will ſuſpend his comforts for a long time: let no man venture upon ſin, for God will take a courſe with him that ſhall be much to his ſorrow.

94. The reaſon why ſome weak Chriſtians have more loving ſouls than men of greater parts, is becauſe great men have corruptions anſwerable to their parts; great gifts, great doubts; they are entangled with arguments, and ſtudy to inform their brains, when others are warm with pious affections. A poor Chriſtian cares not for cold diſputes, inſtead of theſe he grows in divine love; which is the reaſon why ſuch often go to heaven with great joy, whilſt others are entangled and mourn under doubts and fears.

95. Many are troubled with cold affections, and then they think to raiſe love out of their own cold hearts; but we muſt beg of God the ſpirit of love; not wait to bring love to God, but fetch love from him, then ſhall we aſpire towards God and heaven.

96. Love to things more baſe than ourſelves, like a clear ſtream runs into a ſink: as our love is the beſt thing we have, and none deſerves it more than God; Oh let him have our love, yea the ſtrength of our love, that we may love him with all our ſouls, and with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength.

97. As the ſun, when gotten to its height, ſcatters the clouds; ſo a Chriſtian is then in his excellency, when he can ſcatter doubts and fears, when in diſtreſs he can do as David did, comfort himſelf in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

98. Many would be in Canaan as ſoon as they are out of Egypt, they would be at the higheſt pitch preſently; but God will lead us through the wilderneſs of our temptations and afflictions, till we get to heaven; it is part of Chriſtian meekneſs to ſubmit to God, and not to murmur, becauſe we are not as we would be; let us rather magnify the mercies of God, that works

works in us any love to good things, and that he vouchſafes us the leaſt firſt fruits of glory.

99. As noblemens children have tutors, ſo God's children have the ſpirit; this you ſhall do, he ſays, and that you ſhall avoid. The ſpirit not only renews our nature, but leads forward to perfect holineſs. Wicked men have the ſpirit knocking, and fain would enter, yet they will not hear; but God's children have him dwelling in them, and he is their conſtant guide to heavenly bliſs.

100. A Chriſtian in his minority, is not fit to poſſeſs all that he hath a title to, but yet ſo much is allotted to him, as will conduct him through life, and to heaven: If therefore in want, he hath contentment, and in ſuffering he hath patience, &c. All things are his, as well what he wants, as what he enjoys, for he is Chriſt's, 2 Cor. iii. 23.

101. The word of God dwells in our hearts, when it rules in the ſoul, when it directs our thoughts, affections, and converſation; ſo that we dare not do any thing contrary thereunto, but we ſhall be checked. Who ſhall eraſe what God's own finger hath written in our hearts? no fire, nor faggot, no temptation whatever. for the promiſe ſecures eternal glory.

102. We ſhall never be ſatisfied to our comfort, that the Scripture is the word of God, unleſs we know it from itſelf by its own light; and it ſhews itſelf abundantly to a believer to be ſo, in caſting down the ſoul, and altering the mind and converſation. When the word is only in the head, if there come a temptation ſtronger than our faith, we deſpair: the word is far from thoſe that can only diſcourſe of it, who ſee it only as a natural truth, and look upon holy things, not in a divine but in a human manner, and by reaſon alone.

103. When the word dwells as a familiar in the heart, to direct, counſel and comfort us, it is a ſign it abides there; the devil knows good and hates it, therefore knowledge alone is nothing, but if the promiſe alters the temper of the heart itſelf, then it is ingrafted there.

104. God excepts againſt none, if we do not except ourſelves: therefore if thou, whoever thou art, man or woman, wilt come and take Chriſt upon his own terms, for thy Lord and huſband, for

for better for worſe, with perſecutions, affliction, croſſes, &c. So take Chriſt, and take him for ever and thou ſhalt be ſaved.

105. When we believe living truths by the ſpirit, they work upon the heart, and draw the affections after them, if with the heart we believe the goſpel, our ſouls will be ſooner or later carried out to love and embrace Chriſt with great comfort and joy.

106. We may be brought very low, but ſhall not be confounded; we may be brought near to confuſion, to ſhew us the vanity of creature dependence; in the judgment of the world we may be confounded, but the hand of ſovereign mercy ſhall raiſe us up again; and in the depth of our miſery we ſhall not be aſhamed.

107. The reaſon why God's children may often with great perplexity doubt of their ſalvation, is, becauſe they have a principle of ſin in them, as well as of grace: corruption will raiſe doubts, as rotten wood breeds worms; and as vermin out of putrefaction ſo doubts and fears ariſe from remaining corruption: but holineſs ſhall ſoon be perfect, and our joy be full.

108. For want of watchfulneſs God often gives us up for a time to ſuch a perplexed eſtate, that we ſhall not know we have any grace; though we have a principle of grace, yet we ſhall not know it, but may even go out of the world in darkneſs and fear.

109. We ought not at any time to deny the truth, nor yet at all times to confeſs it; for good actions and graces are like princes that only appear abroad on ſome ſpecial occaſions; and ſo if ſome circumſtances in our confeſſion be wanting, the deſign is fruſtrated. It is true of actions, as of words: a word ſpoken in ſeaſon, is like apples of gold, in baſkets of ſilver; therefore wiſdom muſt be our guide in all our behaviour. Converſation is then only good, when it is better than ſilence, and ſpreads the knowledge of Chriſt.

110. It is not lawful for any weak Chriſtian to be preſent at the maſs; Dinah ventured abroad and came crackt home. It is juſt in God, to leave thoſe that dally with temptation, to be caught as many idle perſons have often been, to their ruin.

111. He that will not now deny lawleſs deſires, will not deny himſelf in matters of life, in time of trial. He that hath not learned

learned mortification of the flesh in time of peace, will hardly be brought to it in time of trouble.

112. We must not only stand up for the truth, but in a holy manner, not as proud persons do. Observe that rule in the first epistle of Peter ii. 15. and do it in meekness and fear. We must not bring passion into God's cause, nor must our lives give our tongues the lie.

113. There is such a distance between corrupt nature and grace, that we must have a great deal of preparation; and tho' there be nothing in our preparation, to bring the soul to have grace, yet it brings the soul to a nearer distance, than those that neglect the means of grace, and sin without restraint.

114. Nature cannot work above its own powers as vapours cannot ascend higher than the sun draws them; our hearts are naturally shut, and God opens them by his spirit, in the use of the appointed means: The children of Israel in the wilderness saw wonders upon wonders, yet when they came to be proved, they would not believe. Cry to God, "Help thou mine unbelief!"

115. God's free love hath cast our lot in these happy times of the gospel; and it is further love, that makes choice of some, and leaves others. This should teach us sound humility; consider, that God must open the heart, or else it will remain eternally shut, even against his grace.

116. As grace is not of our own getting, it should teach us patience and hope towards others, waiting, if God at any time will give them repentance; though God work not effectually the first time of conviction, nor the second; yet still wait, as the man that lay at the pool of Bethesda for the moving of the water.

117. He that attends to the word of God, doth not only know the words (which are but the shell) but he knows the things; he hath spiritual light to know what faith and repentance are: there is at that time a spiritual echo in the soul as Psal. xxvii 8. "When thou saidst, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord will I seek." Therefore must men judge of their profiting by the word, not by carrying of it in their memories, but by being made able to bear crosses, and to resist temptations, &c.

118.

118. There ſhould not be intimate familiarities, but where we judge men true chriſtians; and towards thoſe, whom upon good grounds we judge to be ſuch, we muſt be gentle and eaſy to be entreated; we wrong them, if we ſhew ourſelves proud or unkind.

119. True faith works love, and then it works by love; when it hath wrought that holy affection, it works by it; as when the tree is ingrafted and the graft takes, it ſoon grows, and ſhews itſelf in good fruits.

120. The word (from the mouth of God) is more ancient than the ſcripture; and the firſt promiſe of the ſcripture was this, "The ſeed of the woman ſhould break the head of the ſerpent." The ſcripture is but the modus or the manner of conveying the word of God. This ſcripture is the rule whereby we muſt walk; and the judge alſo of all the controverſies of religion, and in ſpite of the church of Rome, it will judge them. St. Auguſtine hath an excellent remark; "when there is contention betwixt brethren, witneſſes are brought; but, in the end, the words, the will of the dead man is brought forth, and theſe words determine: Now ſhall the words of a dead man be of force, and ſhall not the word of Chriſt determine? therefore always look to the ſcriptures."

121. All idolaters ſhall be aſhamed that worſhip images, or that truſt to broken ciſterns. Let thoſe be aſhamed that truſt to their own wit and policy; all thoſe ſhall be aſhamed that exalt themſelves upon any earthly things, for theſe crutches will ſoon be taken away, then ſhall they fall; falſe ſupports ſhall make them all aſhamed.

122. The way to bring faith into the heart, is, firſt, there muſt be a judicious convincing knowledge of the vanity of all things within us and without us, that ſeem to yield ſupport, and then the ſoul is carried to lay hold on Chriſt; as David ſaith, "I have ſeen an end of all perfection." Secondly, the ſoul muſt be convinced of an excellency in religion above all things in the world, or elſe it will not reſt. The heart of man chuſes the beſt, and only when perſuaded that the gain in religion is above all things in the world, or elſe it will not reſt. And, thirdly, a due conſideration of the firmneſs of the ground whereupon the promiſe is built; humbly put God to it, therefore, either to make

make his promiſe good, or to diſappoint thee; and he will be ſure to make it good, in forgiveneſs of ſin, progreſs in grace, and ſtrength in all temptations and times of trouble.

123. Man is naturally of ſuch a ſpirit, that if he hath not what he would, and when he would, he gives up hope. There is not a greater mark of the difference between a child of God, and one that wants faith, than to be haſty; ſuch men, though they be moral, yet are of this mind, they will labour to be ſure of ſomething here; they muſt have preſent pleaſures and preſent profits; if God will ſave them in that way, well; if not, they will put all to the venture.

124. Many things hinder this grace of waiting; there is a great deal of tedious time, and many croſſes we meet with, as the ſcorn of the world, and many other trials, and even God ſeems not to perform his promiſes; but let us comfort ourſelves with this, he only waits to bleſs them that patiently continue in well-doing.

125. We ſhould labour to agree mutually in love, for wherein any Chriſtian differs from another, it is but in little things; grace knows no difference, the worms know no difference, and the day of judgment knows no difference. In the worſt things we are all alike baſe; and in the beſt, in Chriſt we are all alike happy; only in this world, God will have diſtinctions, for the ſake of order, but elſe there is no difference.

126. Chriſtians are like to men of great eſtates, but know not how to uſe them; we live not like ourſelves; exerciſe ſtrong faith, and you ſhall have much grace and comfort: we are ſcanty in our own bowels, therefore labour to have great faith, anſwerable to Chriſt's large riches: though Chriſtians be low enough in outward things, and oftentimes poorer than other men, yet they are rich, for Chriſt bleſſes them under their croſſes. What they want in this world, ſhall be made up in grace now, and glory hereafter.

127. Every one ought daily to imitate Chriſt, do good to all, and as the apoſtle ſaith, "be abundant always in the work of the Lord;" let us labour for enlarged hearts, that we may do good ſeaſonably, abundantly, and unweariedly. O may the love of

of Chriſt gave us the ſame impreſſion that was in him! He did good to all men.

128. None come to God without Chriſt, none come to Chriſt without faith, none come to faith without the means, none enjoy the means but where God hath ſent them; therefore, where there were no means of ſalvation before the coming of Chriſt, there was no viſible intendment of God ordinarily to grant ſalvation. How great a bleſſing is the goſpel!

129 Preventing mercy is the greateſt. How many favours doth God preſent us with? we never aſked for our being, nor for that tender love which our parents bore towards us in our tender years; we never aſked for our baptiſm and ingrafting into Chriſt: What a motive therefore is this to ſtir us up, that when we come to years, we may plead with the Lord, and ſay, "thou waſt concerned for me before I had a being, therefore much more wilt thou now have a gracious care of me, (whom thou haſt reconciled to thyſelf) and remember me in mercy for time to come, and even throughout a bliſsful eternity?"

130. If God's mercy might be overcome with our ſins, we ſhould overcome it every day; it muſt be rich mercy that can fully and for ever ſatisfy the ſoul; and therefore the apoſtle never ſpeaks of it without the extenſions of love, O the height and depth! we want words, we want thoughts to conceive of it: O labour through grace to raiſe your ſouls to large and exalted conceptions and apprehenſions of this mercy that is ſovereign and divine!

131. God is rich in mercy, not only to our ſouls, but in providing all things we need; he keeps us from evil, and ſo he is called a Buckler; he gives us all good things, and ſo is called a Sun; he keeps us now in good condition, but will advance us ſtill higher, even as our nature ſhall be capable, in the heavenly world.

132. The ſun ſhines on the moon and ſtars, and they ſhine upon the earth; ſo doth God ſhine in his goodneſs and grace upon us; that we might ſhine in good works towards all men, eſpecially unto them of the houſhold of faith.

133. We are ſtiled in ſcripture good and righteous, becauſe our underſtandings, our wills, and affections, are our own; but ſo far as they are holy, they are holy, they are the Holy Ghoſt's.

We

We are the principal in our actions, as they are actions; but the Holy Ghoſt is principal of the holineſs of the action. The gracious government of the new creature is alſo from the ſpirit; and if the Holy Ghoſt refuſeth his government, doth not guide and aſſiſt us in every holy action, we muſt be at a ſtand, and cannot proceed. O! let us pray for the ſpirit, and walk in the ſpirit.

134. Every ſinner is a god unto himſelf, not only in reflecting all upon himſelf, but in ſetting about divine things in his own ſtrength; as if he were principal in his own actions, coming to them in the ſtrength of his own reaſon: until God brings us out of carnal ſelf, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt.

135. Thoſe that care not for the word, are ſtrangers to the ſpirit, and they that care not for the ſpirit, never make a right uſe of the word. The word is nothing without the ſpirit, and only animated and quickened by Him. The ſpirit and the word are like the veins and arteries in the body, that give life to the whole. And therefore where the word is moſt revealed there is moſt of the ſpirit; but where Chriſt is not diſplayed in the goſpel, the ſpirit is not at all viſible, (in his ſaving power.)

136. When Chriſt comes into the ſoul by the ſpirit, he carries himſelf familiarly; diſcovering the ſecrets of God the Father, and ſhewing what love there is in God towards us; he teaches us to carry ourſelves in all ſeeming neglects; and when we are at a loſs, he opens a way for us, reſolves our doubts, comforts us in our diſcouragements, and makes us go holily to God in all our neceſſities.

137. As we may know who dwells in a houſe by obſerving who goes in and out; ſo we may know that the ſpirit dwells in us, by obſerving, what ſanctified ſpeeches he ſends forth, what delight he hath wrought in us to things that are ſpiritual, and what price we ſet upon them. A carnal man lowers the price of ſpiritual things, becauſe his ſoul cleaves to ſomething he rejoices in far more; and this is the cauſe why he ſlights the directions and comforts of the word: but thoſe in whom the ſpirit dwells, will conſult it, and not regarding what fleſh and blood dictate, will follow the directions of the word and ſpirit of God.

138. A chriſtian will not do even common things, before he ſanctifies them: he dedicates himſelf, his perſon, and his actions to God; and ſo ſees God in all things. A carnal man looks to reaſon only in all that he doth; but a chriſtian ſees God even in croſſes to humble him, and every thing he makes ſpiritual; yet becauſe there is a double principle in him, there will be ſome ſtirring of the fleſh in all his actions, and ſometimes evil will appear moſt. It is the excellency of a chriſtian's ſtate, that the ſpirit will ere long caſt out all ſin; He will never let the heart and conſcience reſt, till it be for ever baniſhed from the ſoul.

139. The ſpirit of God may be known to be in weak chriſtians, as the ſoul is known to be in the body, by the pulſe: even ſo the ſpirit is diſcovered by groaning under ſin, ſighing, complaining, that it is ſo with them, and no better; ſo that they are out of love with themſelves; this is a happy ſign that the ſpirit dwells in ſuch ſouls.

140. Where the ſpirit dwells largely in any man, there is boldneſs in God's cauſe, a contempt of the world, "He can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens him," his mind is content and ſettled; he can bear with the infirmities of others, and not be offended (for the weak in grace are ſooneſt offended) and is ready to ſay, "Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly." But if corruption bears too much ſway, then, "O ſtay a little that I may recover ſtrength;" that is, ſtay a while that I may repent. The ſoul in ſuch a frame not being fit to appear before God, but only when the ſpirit imparts grace and divine conſolations.

141. While young, carnal delights lead us; and when we are old, covetouſneſs drowns us; ſo that if our knowledge be not ſpiritual, we ſhall not perſevere to the end; and the reaſon why, at the hour of death, ſo many deſpair, is, becauſe they had knowledge without the ſpirit's ſaving grace.

142 God gives comfort in the exerciſe of grace, and the practice of duty; we muſt not therefore ſnatch comforts before we are fit for them; when we perform his precepts, God will beſtow his comforts. If we will make it appear that we truly love God, we muſt keep his commandments, not one, but all; it muſt be univerſal obedience, from the heart as the ſpring, and flow from love.

143.

143. It is a true rule in divinity, that God never takes away any comforts from his people, but he gives them better. When Elijah was taken from Eliſha into heaven, God doubled his ſpirit upon Eliſha; if God take away wife or children, he gives us better bleſſings; the diſciples parted with Chriſt's bodily preſence, but he ſent them the Holy Ghoſt.

144. God will be known of us in thoſe things wherein it is our comfort to know him: in all our devotions, the whole counſels of heaven comfort us jointly; the ſecond perſon prays to the Father, and he ſends the third; and as they have ſeveral titles, ſo they all agree in their love and care to comfort our ſouls.

145. In trouble we are prone to forget all we have heard and read, that makes for our comfort. What is the reaſon a man comes to think of what otherwiſe he ſhould never have called to mind? The Holy Ghoſt brings it to his remembrance; he is a comforter, brings to our minds uſeful things, and at ſuch times, when we moſt need them.

146. Thoſe that care not for the word of God, reject their comfort; all comfort muſt be drawn out of the ſcriptures, which are the breaſts of conſolation: many by education know the truth, and are able to diſcourſe well of it, but they want the ſpirit of truth, and that is the reaſon, why all their knowledge vaniſheth in time of temptation.

147. No man is a true divine but the child of God; he only knows holy things by a holy light and life; other men, tho' they ſpeak of theſe things, yet practically know them not. Take the moſt myſtical points in religion, as juſtification, adoption, peace of conſcience, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, the ſweet benefit of communion of ſaints, the excellent ſtate of a chriſtian even in extremity; inward ſight and ſorrow for ſin; they know not what theſe things mean; for how aptly ſoever they may diſcourſe of them, yet the things themſelves are myſteries: repentance is a myſtery; joy in the Holy Ghoſt is a myſtery; no natural man, though he be ever ſo great a ſcholar, knows theſe things experimentally; he knows them only as phyſicians underſtand medicine, by their books, but not as a ſick man, by his own experience.

148. It is a great ſcandal to religion, that men of great learn-

ing and parts are often wicked men; hereupon the world comes to think that religion is nothing but an empty name. Without inward ſpeci alillumination, they can never know ſpiritual things experimentally; though they profeſs to believe theſe things, yet ſecretly in their hearts they make a ſcorn of converſion and mortification; yea, a preacher may ſpeak of theſe things excellently and to admiration, and yet find not the power of them in his own ſoul.

149. It is good and comfortable to compare our condition with that of the men of the world; for however they may excell in riches and learning, yet we have cauſe to bleſs God, as Chriſt ſaith in Matt. xi. 25. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes." It is good in all outward diſcouragements, thus to reaſon with ourſelves: "Wilt thou, my ſoul, change thy ſtate with the men of the world? God hath advanced thee to an higher order: let them rejoice in their greatneſs; alas, they are miſerable creatures, notwithſtanding all the abundance they enjoy!"

150. If we deſire the ſpirit, we muſt wait in the way of duty; as the apoſtles waited many days before the Comforter came; we muſt alſo empty our ſouls of ſelf-love, and the love of the world, and willingly entertain thoſe croſſes that bring our ſouls outof love with it. The children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs had not the manna till they had ſpent their onions and garlic; ſo this world muſt be out of requeſt with us, before we can be truly ſpiritual: through grace, labour to ſee the excellency of ſpiritual things, how deſpicable then muſt all the glory of the world appear! Theſe things, duly conſidered, will raiſe our deſires more and more towards ſpiritual and heavenly objects.

151. The Holy Ghoſt would not come till Chriſt, by his death, had reconciled his father, and after that, as an argument of full ſatisfaction, had riſen again; becauſe the Holy Ghoſt is the beſt gift of God, and whatſoever grace or comfort was received before was by virtue of Chriſt's atonement, ſo that the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt to the apoſtles and to us, is the beſt fruit of God's reconciliation.

152. If particular judgments come upon man, preſently his conſcience calls back ſins long ago committed by him; and this waking

waking accuſing conſcience ſhews, that we are all ſinful creatures, and need the blood of Jeſus to cleanſe us from all iniquity.

153. Every man by nature though the wiſeſt, (till he is made free by Chriſt) is a ſlave to ſatan, who abuſes his wit and parts, and makes him work out his own damnation: this is not the condition of a few, but the greateſt and wiſeſt in the world, ſatan leads to honours and voluptuouſneſs, as a ſheep is led by a green bough: alas, this crafty ſerpent goes with the ſtream of man's nature, and ſo is not diſcerned!

154. As when a man is called before a judgment-ſeat, being guilty of many crimes, the judge offers him his book; (benefit of clergy) as meaning to ſave him by this method, but he cannot read: now he is condemned, partly for his former faults; but eſpecially becauſe he cannot read, and therefore cannot have the benefit of the law; ſo is a wicked man, through his not believing in Chriſt; becauſe the remedy was prepared, but he refuſed it. In this ſenſe (as ſome divines ſpeak) no ſin but infidelity condemns a man, for if he could believe and repent, no ſin ſhould be prejudicial to his ſalvation. We had need therefore to look well to our faith, as unbelief ſeals a man up under ſin: until he comes to Chriſt, conſcience is his jailor; his conſcience, enlightened by the law, tells him, he is guilty of ſuch and ſuch ſins; and hereupon, as in ſafe cuſtody, keeps him to the future and final judgment.

155. Though there is a deſtructive deceit in ſin, naturally men will deny or diminiſh it, as Adam did; and as Saul, when Samuel came to convince him, "I have," ſaith he, "done the commandment of the Lord;" when driven from that, then he "did but ſpare the cattle for ſacrifice;" but when nothing could ſatisfy, then "I pray thee honour me before the people." Things we cannot juſtify, yet we will excuſe, unleſs God come by his ſpirit, we are ready to ſhift them off, but when the ſpirit comes and takes away all theſe fig leaves, then he convinces each of his miſerable condition; not only in general, but the ſpirit working together with the word, brings him to confeſs, "I am the man."

156. The affection of grief follows upon the diſcovery of ſin, by the miniſtry of the word; when the judgment is convinced, the affections are ſtirred up to hate ſin; and where this is not,

there is no true conviction; when a man cries for mercy, as for life, this is an argument of true repentance. He that is truly convinced, will be as glad of pardon, through Christ, as a malefactor at the place of execution.

157. It is the policy of the devil to make us slight the gracious work of conviction; for he knows that whatsoever is built upon a false foundation will come to nothing, and therefore he makes us slight the work of self-examination; but slight this and slight all; for if careless in examining thyself, thou wilt be partial in thy repentance and obedience.

158. Natural men labour to quiet all checks of conscience by sensuality; men are loath to know themselves to be as they are; they are of the devil's mind, they would not be tormented before their time; such men when they are alone are afraid of themselves; as the elephant will not come near the waters, because he hath an ill shape; he would not see himself: so men by nature will not come under (the word) the light, lest they should see their deformities; nature is so foul by sin, that when a man sees himself, unless he be soon set in a better condition, it will drive him to despair.

159. We ought to have high conceptions of the grace and lordship of Christ, as lord over all our enemies, the fear of death, and the wrath of God, yea whatsoever is terrifying; for he hath freed us from the fear of evil, and given good hope through grace.

160. No sin is so great, but the satisfaction of Christ and God's mercies are greater beyond all comparison. Father's and mother's tendereſt affections are but faint beams, and they lead us upwards to the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

161. The greateſt spite of a carnal man is, that he cannot go to heaven with his full swing in all sin, that he cannot enjoy his full liberty, and therefore he labours to avoid or suppress all the ordinances of God as much as he can.

162. The quinteſſence and spirit of the things we ask in prayer, are in God, as joy, and peace and contentment. Without these, what are all things in the world? and in the want of outward things, if we have God for our portion, we have all bleſ-

bleſſings, becauſe the ſpirit of them all is in him, and in him alone.

163. Prayer is a venting of our deſires to God, from the ſenſe of our wants; and he that is ſenſible of his wants is empty: a poor man, by the ſpirit, earneſtly pours out ſupplication in Chriſt's name, and wreſtles with God in prayer.

164. It is not ſo eaſy a matter to pray, as men may think; in regard of the unſpiritualneſs of our nature, compared with the duty itſelf, in which we draw near to a holy God; we cannot endure to be ſeparated from our luſts; and there is great rebellion in our hearts againſt every thing that is good; and ſatan alſo is our ſpecial enemy. When we go to God by prayer, the devil knows we go to fetch ſtrength againſt him, and therefore he oppoſeth us all he can; but though ſome may mumble over a few prayers, yet indeed no man can pray as he ought, or in faith, that is not within the covenant of grace, nor without the Holy Ghoſt.

165. A child of God may pray and not be heard; becauſe at that time he may be a child under diſpleaſure: if any ſin is not repented of, we are not fit to pray. Will the king regard the petition of a traitor, that purpoſeth to go on in his rebellion, or a father hear a diſobedient child? Therefore when we come to God, we ſhould renew our repentance, faith, and purpoſes of better pleaſing him; then remember the Scripture, and ſearch all the promiſes as part of our beſt riches; and humbly challenge God with his own promiſes This will make us ſtrong and faithful in prayer, when we know we ſhall not pray in vain.

166. When we pray, God often refuſeth to give us comfort, becauſe we have diſpleaſed him; therefore we ſhould look back to our life paſt: perhaps God ſees thee running in this or that ſin, and before he will hear thee, thou muſt renew thy repentance for thy ſins. Our nature is ſuch, that it will knock at every door, and ſeek every corner before we come to God; as the woman in the goſpel, ſhe told all, before ſhe came to Chriſt.—So that God will not hear, before we forſake all dependence upon the creature, and then he gets the greateſt glory, and we have the greateſt ſweetneſs in our ſouls. That water which comes from the fountain is the ſweeteſt; and ſo divine conſolations are the ſweeteſt, when we ſee nothing in the creature;

and God is the beſt diſcerner of the fitteſt time, when to beſtow upon us his own conſolations.

167. When God means to beſtow great bleſſings on his children, he will pour out upon them the ſpirit of prayer; and as all pray for every one, ſo every one prays for all: this is a great comfort to weak Chriſtians; when they cannot pray for themſelves, the prayers of others ſhall prevail.

168. A fool's eye is in every corner, and his afflictions are ſeed ſcattered and ſoon loſt. The only proper object of the ſoul is, that one thing needful, and this only will fill all the corners of it. When a man hath ſucked out the pleaſure of worldly contentments, they are then only dead things; but grace is ever freſh, and always yields freſh and full ſatisfaction.

169. Deſires are the ſpiritual pulſe of the ſoul, always beating, and ſhewing the temper of it; they are therefore the characters of a Chriſtian, and often diſcover more truly what he is, than even his actions do.

170. In the ark was the manna, which was a type of our ſacraments, and the teſtament, which was a type of the word preached, and the rod of Aaron, a type of government; whereſoever is ſpiritual manna, and the word preached, and the rod of Aaron in the government, there is a true church, though there be many corruptions.

171. The bittereſt things in religion are ſweet; there is a ſweetneſs even in reproofs; when God meets with our corruptions, and declares ſuch and ſuch things to be dangerous; and that if we cheriſh them they will lead us to hell. The word of God is ſweet to a Chriſtian, that hath his heart under its influence; is not pardon ſweet to a condemned man, and riches to a poor man, favour to a man in diſgrace, and liberty ſweet to a man in captivity? All that comes from God is ſweet to a Chriſtian that hath his heart touched with both a ſenſe of ſin, and of God's mercy in Chriſt.

172. It would not give happineſs even to ſee Chriſt, but fight with intereſt and enjoyment. There are but two powers of the ſoul, underſtanding and will, when both theſe have their perfection, that is happineſs; when the underſtanding ſees, and the will draws the affections. Theſe things united make up our everlaſting happineſs; the excellency of heavenly things,

things, the ſight of them, our intereſt therein, (and actual enjoyment.)

173. We ſee by experience that there is a ſucceſſion of love; he that loves for beauty will deſpiſe when he ſees more: ſo it is in the ſoul, reſpecting heavenly and earthly things; when the ſoul ſees more excellency, and a ſatisfying fulneſs in heavenly things: then earthly things, like Dagon, immediately fall. St. Paul ſaith, Phil. iii. 8. "I count all things as droſs and as dung in compariſon of Chriſt."

174. In prayer we tempt God, if we aſk that which we labour not for; our faithful endeavours muſt ſecond our devotion; for to aſk maintenance, and not put our hands to the work, is only to knock at the door, and yet pull the door unto us that it might not open. If we pray for grace, and neglect the ſpring from whence it comes, how can we ſpeed? It was a rule in ancient times, Lay thy hand to the plough, and then pray: No man ſhould pray without ploughing, nor plough without prayer.

175. Wiſdom is gotten by experience, in a variety of conditions; he that is carried on in one condition, hath not wiſdom to judge of another ſtate, or how to carry himſelf to a Chriſtian in another condition; becauſe he was never abaſed himſelf, he is ready to deſpiſe and look above his diſtreſſed brother. That we may carry ourſelves as Chriſtians, meekly, lovingly and tenderly to others; God will lead us to heaven in a variety of paths, and not in one uniform condition, as to any outward things.

176. There is no condition, but a Chriſtian picks good matter out of it; as a good artiſt ſometimes makes a good piece of work out of bad materials. A gracious man is not dejected over-much with abaſement, nor lifted up over-much with abundance; but by faith carries himſelf in an uniform manner, becoming a Chriſtian in all conditions: whereas thoſe that have not been in Chriſt's ſchool, nor trained up in a variety of conditions, learn nothing; if they abound they are proud; if they be diſtreſſed they murmur and deſpair; as if there were not a divine providence that ruled the world.

177. There is through ſin, vanity, and miſery in every thing under the ſun; but when divine grace comes, it removes the curſe,

curſe, and takes out the ſting of all evil, then we find good even in the worſt things, and wait for complete ſalvation.

178. Chriſtianity requires the greateſt diligence: if we look up to God, what a multitude of things are required of a Chriſtian, to carry himſelf as he ſhould; a ſpirit of faith, of love, of joy, and of delight in God above all: and if we look to men, there are duties for a Chriſtian to his ſuperiors, a ſpirit of ſubjection; to equals he muſt ſhew a ſpirit of love; and to inferiors, a ſpirit of pity and liberality: if we look to ſatan, we have a commandment to watch, and reſiſt the tempter: if we look to the world, it is full of ſnares, there muſt be conſtant ſpiritual watchfulneſs, that we be not ſurpriſed: and if we look to ourſelves, there are many duties required, to carry our veſſels in honour, and to walk within the rules of the Holy Ghoſt, to preſerve the peace of our conſciences, and always to walk anſwerably to our dignity, as being the ſons of God, and coheirs with Chriſt. The Chriſtian muſt diſpenſe with himſelf in no ſin, muſt be prepared for every good work, and muſt refrain from no ſervice that God calls him unto. The life of a Chriſtian therefore continually abounds with honourable and profitable employment.

179. Sincerity is the perfection of Chriſtians. Let not ſatan therefore abuſe us, we do all things when we purpoſe and endeavour to do all things; and are grieved when we cannot do better; then in ſome meaſure, we do perform all things, thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening us.

180. A Chriſtian is able to do great things, but only by Chriſt, who ſtrengthens him. The underſtanding, the affections, and the will are ours; but the ſanctifying and the carrying out of theſe powers in a ſupernatural way, to perform duties ſpiritually, that is not ours, but it is Chriſt's; and for his ſake alone our beſt duties are acceptable to God.

181. We have not only the life of grace from Chriſt, at firſt, and receive from time to time ſpiritual power, whereby our faculties are more and more renewed, ſo that we are able to do ſomething in our wills; but we have the deed itſelf from Chriſt, for by his ſpirit, he gives and then ſtrengthens grace for the performance of his commands.

182.

182. God preſerves his own work by his ſpirit; firſt. he graciouſly moves us to ſerve him, and then he preſerves us in duty, and arms and animates us againſt all oppoſition.

183. Though Chriſt be an head of influence, from which all grace flows into every member; yet he is a ſovereign head, and gives it according to his own good pleaſure, and the exigence of his members. Sometimes we need more grace, then it flows plentifully and ſupplies all our wants. Sometimes we need to know our own weakneſs; then the Lord our ſtrength and our guide leaves us to ourſelves, that we may know, that without him we cannot ſtand, and know the neceſſity of his guidance to heaven, in the ſenſe of our imperfections, and of ſuch corruptions, as before we thought were wholly ſubdued. Moſes, by God's permiſſion, was tempted to murmur, ſuch a meek man; and David to cruelty, ſuch a mild man: they thought they had not thoſe corruptions ſo prevalent in their hearts.

184. God is forced to mortify our ſins by afflictions, becauſe we will not mortify them by the ſpirit in the uſe of holy means. A gracious God gives us favours from his own tendereſt love; but corrections are always forced, though very neceſſary for our ſouls good.

185. We may for the moſt part read the cauſe of any judgment, in the judgment itſelf: as, if it be ſhame, then the cauſe was pride; if it be want, then our ſin was, that we did not learn how to abound as we ſhould, when we poſſeſſed God's mercies.

186. As we ſay of thoſe that make bold with their bodies, to uſe them hardly, to ruſh upon dangers; in their youth they may bear it, but it will be owing them afterwards; they ſhall find it in their bones when they are old: ſo a man may ſay of thoſe that make no conſcience of running into all ſins, theſe will be owing to them another day: they ſhall hear of their ſins in time of ſickneſs, or in the hour of death. Therefore, O take heed of ſinning upon vain hope, that thou ſhalt wear it off, for one time or another thy guilt will find thee out, will ſtick by thee, and like an arrow pierce thy conſcience.

187. When God viſits with ſickneſs, we ſhould think (in the uſe of means) our work is more in heaven with God, than with men

men, or medicine. When David dealt ſincerely with God, and confeſſed his ſins, God forgave them, and healed his body too, Pſal. ciii. 2.

188. It were a thouſand times better for many perſons to be caſt on a bed of ſickneſs, and to be God's priſoners, than ſo ſcandalouſly to abuſe the health they have continued ſo long.

189. It is an art wherein we ſhould labour to be expert, to conſider God's grace and love in the midſt of his corrections; that in the midſt of them, we might have thankful, and chearful, and fruitful hearts: which we ſhall not have, unleſs we find ſome matter of thankfulneſs and praiſe. Conſider therefore, doth God make me weak? he might have ſtruck me with death; or if not, yet he might have awfully, and long ago given me up to ſpiritual death, to an hard heart, and to endleſs deſpair.

190. In this latter age of the world, God doth not uſe the ſame method of diſpenſation as of old: he doth not always outwardly viſit for ſin; for his government hath now a ſpecial reference to the ſouls of men. Therefore we ſhould take the more diligent heed in worldly proſperity; for an offended God may give us up to ſpiritual blindneſs, and awful ſecurity; which are the greateſt judgments that can befall us, and forebode endleſs wrath.

191. We ſhould judge ourſelves before God, for thoſe things that the world cannot know, for ſpiritual ſins; as the motions of pride, of worldlineſs, of revenge, of ſecurity, unthankfulneſs, and ſuch like unkindneſs towards God; and in general, our barrenneſs in all good duties, that we owe to God and men.—Such ſins the world cannot ſee; yet theſe ſhould humble our hearts; for when we do not make conſcience of ſpiritual ſin, God may ſoon give us up to ſome open abominations, that ſtain and publicly diſgrace our holy profeſſion.

192. Many oppoſe the power of divine grace, and reſt in common, civil, and mere outward performance. But if we will not duly regard the manner, God regards not the matter of the ſervice we do; therefore often he puniſhes profeſſors for their ill performance of good duties; as we ſee in 1 Cor. xi. 30, 31.

193. Our whole life under the goſpel, ſhould be nothing but

but thankfulneſs and fruitfulneſs. But Oh! take heed of turning the grace of God into wantonneſs. The honour, grace, and authority of the goſpel, all require, "that we ſhould deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and live righteouſly and ſoberly and godly in this preſent world," &c. When tempted to act otherwiſe, inſtantly we ſhould think; O this is not the life of a Chriſtian under the goſpel! the goſpel requires a more fruitful, a more zealous carriage, more love to Chriſt, &c.

194. If any man be ſo uncivil, when a friend ſhews him a ſpot on his garment, that he grows angry; do we not judge him an unreaſonable man? ſo when told, this will hinder your comfort another day; if men were not ſpiritually ſtupid and proud, would they ſwell and be angry with ſuch a friend? let us thankfully take the benefit of the judgement of other men. This was David's diſpoſition, when told of his danger from preſent temptation, as he was marching to ſlay Nabal and his houſhold. So we ſhould bleſs God, and bleſs our friends, that labour by their good counſel and advice, to hinder us from every ſinful courſe.

195. Thoſe that gird up the loins of their minds, and are guided in all their ways by God's word, are the only ſound chriſtians; and they are the only comfortable chriſtians, that can, through grace, think of all conditions with comfort, always looking unto Jeſus.

196. It is an ill time to get, when we ſhould uſe grace; therefore that we may have leſs to do, when it is enough to ſtruggle with ſickneſs, nay, at laſt, have nothing elſe to do, but to die, and comfortably yield up our ſouls to God. Oh! through grace let us be daily exact in our accounts; every day exerciſe repentance and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

197. God takes a ſafe courſe with his children, that they may not be condemned with the world: he permits the world to condemn them, that they may not love the world: the world hates them, that they may not love the world; that they may be crucified to it, the world muſt be crucified to them. Therefore they meet with ſuch croſſes, and abuſes, and wrongs in the world. Becauſe he will not ſuffer them to periſh with the world, he ſends them many afflictions in and by the world.

198.

198. If God did not exerciſe us with ſeaſonable corrections, we ſhould often ſhame religion, and greatly diſhonour Chriſt. God in preventing mercy chaſtens us often with fatherly correction.

199. In the troubles of our chriſtian life we are carried naturally to ſecond cauſes; whereas they all but as rods in God's hand: look therefore to the hand that ſmites; look to God in all; he chaſtiſeth us. Say as David in the matter of Shimei; and as Job ſaith, "It is the Lord that gave, and the Lord hath taken away."

200. We have often occaſion to bleſs God more for croſſes than for our comforts; there is a bleſſing hidden in the worſt things to God's children; as there is a croſs in the beſt, to the wicked: to the ſaints there is a bleſſing in death, in ſickneſs, in the hatred of enemies, a bleſſing in all our ſorrows. In our afflictions we ſhould not only juſtify God, but glorify him for his mercies; becauſe rather than we ſhould be condemned with the world, he will graciously take his courſe that we might be partakers of his holineſs, and ſo become more and more meet for glory.

201. Though our ſalvation be ſure, yet the knowledge of this doth not make us ſecure; though God will not baniſh us with ſinners, yet for our ſins he will ſharply correct us here. By a careful ſober life, we might obtain, from his mercy in Chriſt, many bleſſings, and find our pilgrimage much more comfortable: therefore it argues neither grace nor wit, that becauſe God will ſave me, I will take any ſinful liberties; no, tho' God will ſave thee, yet thou ſhalt endure ſuch ſharp anguiſh, that ſin ſhall become far more bitter, than the ſweeteſt fruit of it was ever pleaſant.

202. Gracious perſons in times of peace often undervalue themſelves, and the grace of God in them; thinking that they want faith, patience, and love; who yet, when God calleth them out to ſuffer croſſes, eminently by his grace ſhine forth in the eyes of others, in the example of a meek and quiet ſubjection to the will of God.

203. God often maketh wicked men friends to his children, without changing their diſpoſition, by only putting into their hearts ſome kind thoughts for the time; which incline them to ſhew

ſhew favour; Nehemiah ii. 8. God put it into the king's head to favour his people: ſo Gen. xxxiii. 4. Eſau was not changed, only God for the time turned his affections to favour Jacob: ſo God ſtirs up the hearts of many, who ſtill remain notoriously wicked, ſignally to favour the beſt, the holieſt perſons.

204. Uſually in what meaſure, in time of peace and liberty, we do inordinately let looſe our affections; in that ſame meaſure are we ſoon caſt down, or the more deeply diſtreſſed: when our adulterous hearts cleave to things earthly or ſinful, the croſs becomes more heavy, and our pains more ſharp and extreme.

205. In ſpiritual conflicts a man is never overcome till his conſcience be cracked: if conſcience be good, and his cauſe right, he doth conquer, and ſhall be made more than a conqueror, in Chriſt's ſtrength.

206. Partial and temporary obedience, is not obedience: in eaſy things that do not oppoſe our luſts, which are not againſt our reputation, ſome will do more for a time than they need: but our obedience muſt be impartial, univerſal, and conſtant, becauſe God commands it to be ſo.

207. From every evil work to which we are tempted, we always need delivering grace; as to every good work, God's aſſiſting grace: (by grace we are ſaved, and it is the gift of God.)

208. That chriſtian who is conſcious of good intentions to abſtain from all evil, may preſume that God will aſſiſt him againſt temptations for the time to come, and render him victorious.

209. We ſhould watch daily, continue inſtant in prayer, ſtrengthen our ſupplications with arguments from God's word and promiſes, and mark how our prayers ſpeed. When we ſhoot an arrow, we look to its fall; when we ſend a ſhip to ſea we look for its return; and when we ſow, we look for an harveſt. When we have ſowed our prayers, through Chriſt, in God's boſom, ſhall we not wait for an harveſt, not look for an anſwer to our cries, not obſerve how we ſpeed? It is atheiſm to pray, and not to wait in hope. A ſincere chriſtian will pray, wait, ſtrengthen his heart with the promiſes, and never leave praying and looking up, till God gives him a gracious anſwer.

210

210. A circumſpect chriſtian, whatſoever he doth, will do it in fear; he calls God, Father, with filial fear; and eats and drinks with a cautious fear. St. Jude ſpeaks of them that eat without fear: but the true ſervant of God hath an holy fear accompanying him in all his actions, in his words, and even in his recreations, in his meat and drink, and throughout his life. He that hath not this fear, how bold in wicked courſes, and looſe in all his conduct? But mark a true Chriſtian, and you ſhall always ſee in him ſome happy expreſſions of holy fear.

211. The relation of ſervant is of great conſequence, to put us in mind of our own duty. If we will be God's ſervants, we muſt make ſuch a profeſſion good, by our obedience; we muſt reſolve, through grace, to come wholly under his government, obey all his commands, or elſe he will ſay to us, as to them in Judges x. 14. "Go to the gods whom you have ſerved." Empty relations are nothing; if we profeſs to be God's ſervants, and do not honour him by obedience, we take but an empty title. O let us ſeek for grace to make our profeſſed relation good, at leaſt in our affections and endeavours, that we may ſay, even to our God, "I deſire to fear thy name: yea with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee early." Iſa xxvi. 8, 9.

212. In reading the ſcriptures, compare experience with divine declarations. As Neh. i. 8, 9. "If you ſin you ſhall be ſcattered, and if you return again I will be merciful." We ſhould often and particularly practiſe this in the courſe of our lives; to ſee how God hath made good his threatenings in our corrections, and his promiſes in our comforts.

213. Thoſe that have had ſweet communion with God, but loſt it, count every day a thouſand, till they have recovered it again. When Chriſt leaves his ſpouſe, he forſakes her not altogether, but leaves ſomething in the heart, to make her long for his return. He abſents himſelf, only that he may enlarge and raiſe the deſires of the ſoul, and when the ſoul hath found him again, it will not let him go. He comes, and he leaves us, for our good; we ſhould judge rightly of our ſtate, and not think we are forſaken of God, when we are under deſertion.

214. If men can find no comfort, and yet ſet themſelves to teach and encourage weaker chriſtians, by way of reflection, they frequently receive great comfort to themſelves. So doth God reward this duty of mutual diſcourſe; that thoſe things we did

did not ſo fully underſtand before, by diſcourſe we come to know and reliſh far better. This ſhould teach us to love, and often engage in holy conference: for beſides the good we do to others, we ſhall be profited ourſelves.

215. We may uſe God's creatures without ſcruple or ſuperſtition, but yet muſt not uſe them as we liſt. There is a difference between our right, and the uſe of that right; the magiſtrate may reſtrain that right, and ſo may our weak brother, in caſe of ſcandal: ſo that, though all things be ours, yet in the uſe of them, we muſt be ſober, not eating or drinking immoderately, nor uſing any thing uncharitably, whereby others may take offence: for though we have a right to God's bounty, yet our right, and the exerciſe of it, always muſt be ſanctified, by the word of God and prayer.

216. Many lament, O that I had aſſurance of my ſalvation! O that I were a child of God! Why (man) in faith be zealous in obedience. But I cannot, the ſpirit muſt enable me. Yet come to holy exerciſes, God often gives the ſpirit; therefore attend upon the means, till you find ſtrength to obey. Wait upon God's ordinances till he ſhall enliven thy ſoul. All you that love your ſouls attend upon the means of grace, and with ſpecial care always to ſanctify the Lord's day: John was "in the ſpirit on the Lord's day," Rev. i. 10.

217. God takes nothing from his children, but inſtead thereof he gives them what is better. Happy is ſelf-denial that is more than balanced by joy in God. Happy is poverty that abounds with grace and comfort. Let us not fear what God ſhall call us to bear or ſuffer. It is hard, nay impoſſible, to perſuade fleſh and blood to baniſh fear; but they ſtill hope in God that find theſe things by experience. Chriſtians do find, even with their croſſes, particular comforts, flowing from the preſence of Chriſt's ſpirit. St Paul would not have eſcaped the greateſt ſufferings, to have miſſed ſuch abounding conſolations.

218. Chriſt chiefly manifeſts himſelf in times of affliction, becauſe then the ſoul unites itſelf moſt cloſely by faith to Chriſt. The ſoul, in time of proſperity, ſcatters its affections and loſeth itſelf in the creature; but there is an uniting power in ſanctified afflictions, by which a believer, (as in rain a hen collects her brood) gathers his beſt affections unto his Father and his God.

219. Christ took our nature, suffered hunger, and was subject to all sinless infirmities; when we are put to difficulties in our calling, to trouble for a good conscience, or to any hardship, we must labour for contentment; because we are not easily made conformable unto Christ: we must suffer, then "reign with him," Rom. viii. 18.

220. There is not any thing, nor any condition, which befalls a christian, but there is a general rule in the scripture for it: and this rule is quickened by example, for our direction and encouragement. God not only writes his law in naked commandments, but enlivens them with the practice of some one or other of his servants. Who can read David's Psalms, but he shall read himself in them? He cannot be in any trouble but David was in the same, &c.

221. As children in the womb have eyes and ears, not for that place, but for civil life, wherein they shall use all their members: even so our life here is not for this world only, but for another; we have large capacities, memories, affections and expectations; God doth not give us such powers for this world only, but for heaven.

222. In a christian that hath studied mortification, you shall even see the life of Jesus, in his sickness, in a great deal of patience and heavenly-mindedness. When his condition is much above his own power, faith in Christ derives strength far above his condition.

223. As men cherish young plants at first, and fence them with hedges; but when grown they remove them, and leave the trees to the wind and storms; so God sustains his children at first with inward comforts; but afterwards they are exposed to storms and winds, because better able to bear them. Let no man think himself the better, because he is more free from trouble than others; God sees him not fit to bear greater.

224. When we read the scripture, faith should take something for ourselves; as when we read any promise, this is mine; and find any privilege, this is mine, it was written for me; as the apostle saith, "Whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning," &c. Rom. xv. 4.

225. As the Spirit is necessary to work faith at first, so to every act of faith; for faith cannot act upon occasion, but by the Spirit

Spirit; and therefore we ſhould not attempt to do, or to ſuffer any thing raſhly, but beg the ſpirit of God, and hope for his aſſiſtance, becauſe according to the increaſe of trouble, muſt our faith grow. The life of a chriſtian commences by the ſpirit's working faith at firſt, but is promoted upon all occaſions by his animating our graces already received. Faith ſtirs up all others, and holds every grace to the word; and ſo long as faith continues active, all other graces are lively too.

226. There is no true chriſtian but hath a public ſpirit, to ſeek the good of others; becauſe as ſoon as he is a chriſtian he labours for ſelf denial. He knows he muſt give up himſelf, and all to God, ſo that his ſpirit is enlarged in an increaſing meaſure towards God, and the church. The greater portion a man hath of the ſpirit of Chriſt, the more he glorifies God, and promotes the good of all mankind.

227. If we would have hearts always to praiſe the Lord, we muſt ſee every thing as received from God, to be of grace, and abundance of grace; whatſoever we have more than nature yields, is abundant grace; from Jeſus we have all as chriſtians, though we may be poor and diſtreſſed, in our paſſage to heaven.

228. There are three main parts of ſalvation; firſt, a true knowledge of our miſery; and ſecondly, knowledge of our deliverance; and then a life conformable to the word. Theſe the Holy Ghoſt only can work, he only convinceth of ſin, then alſo of righteouſneſs, and of judgment, and leads us by faith and holineſs to heaven.

229. That we may be convinced of ſin, the ſpirit gives a clear and commanding demonſtration of our condition by nature, and anſwers all cavils. When we ſee the ſun ſhine, we know it is day; ſo the ſpirit not only convinceth us in general, that we are all ſinners, but in particular, and with power, "Thou art the man." This conviction is alſo univerſal, of ſins of nature, of ſins of life; ſins of the underſtanding, of the will, and of the affections; of the miſery of ſin, of the danger of ſin, of the folly and madneſs of ſin; of ſins againſt ſo many motives, ſo many favours. Proud nature intrenches itſelf with excuſes, ready tranſlations to others, and many mitigations of guilt. It is neceſſary, therefore, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould join with men's conſciences to make every one confeſs, "I am the man."

230. Conviction from the ſpirit may be known from common conviction of conſcience, by this, that what is only natural is weak, like a little ſpark, and points out only groſs ſins, and chiefly thoſe againſt the goſpel. Again, common conviction is againſt a man's will, and it makes him not the better man; though tutored by it, he runs from Chriſt; but a man that is convinced by the ſpirit, joins the ſpirit againſt himſelf, accuſeth himſelf, and is willing to have even his heart-evils laid open, that he may ſeek and find the riches of mercy through Chriſt.

231. It is not enough to know by the word, that there is ſtrength and righteouſneſs in Chriſt; but the ſpirit muſt open the eyes of the ſoul, elſe we ſhall only have a natural knowledge of ſupernatural things. It is neceſſary to have a ſupernatural ſight, ſo to ſee ſupernatural things, as to change the ſoul; therefore the ſpirit only can work faith to ſee, Chriſt is mine. Further, only the ſpirit can lead the conſcience to reſt, becauſe he is greater than conſcience, and can anſwer all the cavils of fleſh and blood; unleſs the Holy Ghoſt doth effectually apply what Chriſt hath done, the conſcience will not be ſatisfied.

232. The beſt chriſtians would be in darkneſs, and call their ſtate in queſtion, if the Holy Ghoſt did not convince them, and anſwer all the cavils for them; we muſt not only be convinced at firſt by the ſpirit, but throughout our chriſtian courſe. This ſhould make us come to God's ordinances with theſe holy aſpirations; "Lord, vouchſafe the ſpirit of revelation, take the ſcales from mine eyes, that as theſe are thy truths, ſo they may be profitable to me; do thou graciously incline my ſoul, that in faith I may caſt myſelf entirely upon thine infinite mercy in Chriſt Jeſus!"

233. Spiritual conviction is not total in this life, but always leaves in the heart ſome dregs of doubting, though the ſoul be ſafe. As a ſhip that rides at anchor holds it, ſo the ſoul that is ſomewhat convinced of its good ſtate, may be toſſed with many doubts and fears, but the anchor is in heaven, and ſecures its everlaſting ſalvation.

234. The ſpirit of God doth ſo far convince every Chriſtian of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as to preſerve in him ſuch power of grace as to caſt himſelf upon the mercy of God. God will ſend his ſpirit into the heart, and it ſhall not deſpair; he will ſend

ſend ſuch beams of light and grace into the ſoul, as all the powers of hell ſhall never exclude.

235. When we neglect prayer, and engage in other duties in our own ſtrength; if we belong to God we ſhall be ſure to miſcarry, though another man perhaps may ſeem to proſper. Oh! let us all be continually dependent upon God for his direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, in whatſoever we engage.

236. As ſome women, becauſe they will not endure the pain of child-birth, kill their children in the womb; ſo many, who will not be troubled with holy duties, ſtifle holy motions: Oh take heed of rejecting the motions of the holy ſpirit! entertain them with thankfulneſs; that when devout affections are kindled, they may turn to reſolutions, and reſolutions proceed to all holy obedience.

237. It is commonly found that we cannot converſe with company, that are not ſpiritual, but, if they vex us not, they will taint us, unleſs we be put upon them in our callings. O! make ſpecial choice of your company, and walk in continual watchfulneſs.

238. It is rebellion againſt God to commit ſelf-murder; the very heathens could ſay, "We muſt not leave our ſtation till we be called." It is the voice of ſatan, "Caſt thyſelf down." But what ſaith Paul to the jailor, "Do thyſelf no harm, for we are all here." We ſhould ſo carry ourſelves, that we may be content to ſtay here, till God hath done his work in us and by us: and then he will graciouſly call us hence in the very beſt time.

239. He is a valiant man that can command himſelf in the way of duty, to ſuffer affliction. He that cannot endure ſome diſgrace in the world, ſhews great weakneſs. Chriſt hath ſet us an example, for he could have come down from the croſs; but he ſhewed his power moſt, by enduring reproaches and torments, even unto death.

240. The reaſon why many Chriſtians ſtagger, and are ſo full of doubts, is, becauſe they are idle, and labour not diligently to grow in grace. Oh! let us earneſtly ſtrive after increaſing knowledge and mortification, for hereby through grace, we ſhall riſe to aſſurance.

241. Whatſoever is good in a natural man is depraved by a ſelf-end; ſelf-love rules all his actions, he keeps within himſelf, makes his chief end himſelf, and God is but his idol. This is true of all natural men in the world, they make themſelves their great end; and when the end is depraved, the whole courſe muſt be wrong.

242. The ſenſe of aſſured hope cannot be maintained without great diligence and watchfulneſs, 2 Pet. i 10. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure:" intimating that certainty will not be gained nor preſerved without it. It is only the diligent and watchful Chriſtian that hath this aſſurance.—The Holy Ghoſt will ſuffer us to be in a miſt, and continue under a cloud, if we ſtir not up the graces of the ſpirit; it is grace in exerciſe, that is an earneſt, and ſo faith and hope in exerciſe are earneſts of glory. If grace ſleeps, you may have it, and not know it: Oh! then labour, by the ſpirit, to keep your graces always in lively exerciſe.

243. Thoſe that have aſſurance of their ſalvation, have oftentimes troubleſome diſtractions, becauſe they do not always ſtand on their guard; ſometimes are lifted up to heaven, and ſometimes caſt down even to hell; yet always at the worſt, ſomething in the ſoul ſuggeſts that it is not utterly caſt off by a merciful Redeemer.

244. He to whom this pilgrimage is pleaſant, loves not heaven as he ſhould; the pleaſures of this life are ſo ſuitable to nature, that we ſhould ſit down by them, if God did not follow us with ſeveral croſſes: O let us readily ſubmit to every croſs; becauſe it is out of ſpecial love that we are exerciſed, leſt we ſhould ſurfeit upon earthly things.

245. In melancholy diſtempers, eſpecially when there is guilt on the ſoul we can find no comfort in wife, children, friends, eſtate, &c. It is a pitiful ſtate, when body, ſoul, and conſcience, all are diſtempered; but even now let a Chriſtian look to God's nature and promiſes; though he cannot live by ſight, yet let him live much by faith.

246. Though God may perſonate an enemy, yet faith ſees a father's love, and apprehends ſome beams of comfort. Tho' there be no ſenſe and feeling; yet the ſpirit quickens faith, whereby

whereby the ſoul is able to cleave to God, and alledge his word and nature, even under his rod.

247. The reaſon why the world ſeeth not the happy condition of God's children is, becauſe their bodies are ſubject to the ſame infirmities with the worſt of men; and they are ſubject to fall into groſs ſins; therefore worldly men think, are theſe men happier than we? they ſee their croſſes, but not their crowns; they ſee their infirmities, but not their graces; they ſee their miſeries, but not their inward joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

248. To walk by faith is to be active; not to do as we liſt, it is an acting by a divine rule. Since the fall, we have loſt our hold of God; and we muſt be brought again to God, by the ſame way we fell from him; we fell by infidelity, but muſt be brought back by faith, and live upon ſuch grounds as faith affords: we muſt walk by faith, looking upon God's promiſe, and his commandments; and not live by opinion, example, nor carnal reaſon.

249. In our callings, when we think we ſhall do no good, but all things ſeem contrary; yet faith ſays, God hath ſet me here, I will caſt in my net at thy commandment: let us look to God's word, ſee what he commands, and then by faith caſt ourſelves upon him, and leave the ſucceſs to God's wiſdom, power and grace.

250. A Chriſtian hath ſenſe and experience of God's love, together with his faith: it is not a naked faith, or without any reliſh; and that ſenſe and experience we have is given to ſtrengthen faith for time to come: therefore when we have any ſweet feelings, we muſt not reſt in them, inſtead of Chriſt and heaven; but always remember, that divine conſolations are given, to encourage us in our way, and to raiſe our hopes of fulneſs of joy to the heavenly world.

251. There is a double act of faith: firſt, the direct, whereby I caſt myſelf upon Chriſt; and there is a reflex act, whereby I know that I am in a ſtate of grace, by the fruits of the ſpirit; by the firſt act we are ſaved. Feelings (ſenſible comfort and joy) are often divided from the firſt act; for God may enable a man to caſt himſelf entirely upon Chriſt, and yet for ſome gracious ends he ſhall not immediately know it, becauſe God will further humble him: God gives the reflex act (which

is assured hope) as a reward of exact walking with him; but we must look to the closing act of faith as that which saves us. We ought to live by this direct act of faith, till we get to heaven; but add to this, that no man walks by lively faith, that wants spiritual comfort.

252. God often defers to help his children, till they are in extremity; because he will have them live by faith, and not by sight: as good Jehosaphat, "We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee:" 2 Chron. xx. 12 St Paul received the sentence of death in himself, that he might trust in God, 2 Cor. i. 9 This is the cause of divine desertions. God leaves his children, and many seem to be their enemy, because he will have us live by faith; and when we live so, we glorify him, and he graciously rewards us, with special tokens of his love

253. Howsoever things are in our sight, we should give God the honour to trust his promises. Though his dealings towards us seem to be, as to reprobates, yet believe his word, and humbly and earnestly plead, "Lord, remember thy promise to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust," Psal. cxix 49. Cease not to wrestle with God, for by his spirit in prayer, he doth often convey secret and suitable strength to his children, that they may be able to prevail with him, and gain all promised blessings.

254. The reason why many Christians at the hour of death, are full of doubts and fears, is this, because in their life time, alas! too carnal, they have not been much exercised, in living by faith in the Redeemer.

255. Confidence doth certainly arise from faith, when troubles make it stronger. It is a true evidence of grace, when confidence increaseth with opposition; great troubles exciting greater confidence in Christ. Again, it is a sign a man's confidence is well grounded, when he can carry himself equal in all conditions, having learned both how to want and how to abound.—When a man hath an even gracious spirit, to be content in all conditions, it argues a well grounded confidence towards God.

256. None can be truly confident of the divine favour, and a title to heaven, but only God's children. Other men's confidence

dence is like a mad man's ſtrength, who may have that of two or three for a time, but it is falſe ſtrength. When they are lifted up upon the wings of ambition and favour of men, they boaſt; but theſe men in the time of trial ſoon ſink: "The hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh." Job viii. 13.

257. Wicked men are at death forced out of the world like malefactors, unwilling to leave their priſons; but God's children deſire, when they die, to depart in obedience to his call, "Lord, now let thy ſervant depart in peace according to thy word," Luke ii. 29. To be in the body is good, becauſe we live by faith; but it is better to be with the Lord, becauſe then we ſhall live by ſight, and in perfect bliſs.

258. An ambitious man undermines all others; if an enemy ſtands to reſiſt him, he will make his way even through blood. He will alſo tread upon his friends to get to honour: a ſoul that is graciouſly ambitious, conſiders what ſtands in his way, and hates father and mother, nay his own life; pulls out the right eye; even cuts off his right hand, and offers violence to every thing that ſtands betwixt him and his God.

259 We ſhould ſtudy the Scriptures, to find what is acceptable to God. What doth moſt pleaſe God? It is holineſs: and grace and mercy are alſo his delight; therefore we ſhould ſtudy to be holy, and gracious, and merciful. "This is the will of God," ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. iv 3. "even your ſanctification, that is, to be holy as God is holy." Thoſe that will be acceptable to God, muſt be good in private, in their cloſets; becauſe ſincerity ſuppoſeth that God ſees all; andbe humbled for the riſings of ſin, becauſe even theſe are ſeen by Chriſt, with grief and hatred.

261. Let no man be diſcouraged from doing any good action, for ſo far as any action is good, it ſhall certainly be rewarded. The ſcribes and phariſees ſought and received honour from men for their reward. The Romans were juſt in their civil government; and God ſo bleſſed them, that their common-wealth flouriſhed for many hundred years. Let people be what they will (if only civil) they ſhall have a reward ſuitable to that good they do. As for heaven and happineſs with Chriſt in another world, they care not, yet every man ſhall have his penny, Matt. xx. 13.

262.

262. It is the great art of faith to apprehend Chriſt, ſuitably to our preſent condition; when fallen into ſin, think of the terrors of the law; but when penitent, look to him as a Saviour, inviting all to come unto him; and ſo neither ſhall Chriſt be diſhonoured, nor our ſouls be injured.

263. It is much to be deſired, there were that love in ſome men, to teach what they know; and that humility in others, to be inſtructed in what they know not. God humbles ſometimes great perſons, to learn of others that are mean; and it is our duty, and will be our comfort, to embrace the truth, whoſoever brings it: and often mean perſons are the inſtruments of knowledge and comfort, to many that have greater endowment than themſelves; as Aquila and Priſcilla inſtructed Apollos, Acts xviii. 26.

264. If Chriſt ſeeks us before we ſought him, will he refuſe us, when we ſeek after him? Let no man therefore deſpair, or even be diſcouraged: if there be in thee the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of ſin; there is much more height, and depth, and length, and breadth of mercy in God. Though you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again. Jer. iii. 1. "For his thoughts are not as ours;" and his mercies are the mercies of a God reconciling the world unto himſelf.

265. When under a cloud of temptations, take heed of oppoſing your comforts: it wrongs Chriſt's intentions; he would not have us at any time uncomfortable; and beſides, whilſt we are in ſuch a frame, we are unfit to glorify God. Fear binds the ſoul, or brings it into a palſied temper; we are not fit to do any thing as we ought, without ſome love, and ſome joy. Though at preſent under a cloud, yet the ſun is always the ſame; we may for a time, want the light of God's gracious countenance, but never the ſweet influences of the Holy Ghoſt.

266. Moſt men (if they could) would always live here, but whoſoever is a partaker of the benefits of Chriſt's reſurrection, his mind doth preſently aſcend where Jeſus reigns. We are always enlarging our deſires, in this ſtate of imperfection, but faith ſees a fulneſs of joy.

267. Many that make a profeſſion, like the hawk, aſcend high, and look low; but thoſe that look high, aſcend on high, as being riſen with Chriſt: for a Chriſtian forgets what is behind, and

and aſpires, aſcending higher and higher, till he riſes to his place before the throne of God; but, as at Chriſt's riſing there was an earthquake, ſo ſuch as are riſen with him, now find great commotions and conflicts between the fleſh and the ſpirit.

268. Chriſt takes ſpecial care of all his diſciples, even when by reaſon of guilt they have moſt cauſe to be diſconſolate.—When the heart is upright towards God; it is not to be expreſſed, what indulgence he ſhews to ſuch poor ſinners: though Peter had denied him, yet in Mark xvi. 7. "Go tell my diſciples, and tell Peter:" Chriſt took great care particularly to aſſure him of his love, though he had moſt ſhamefully denied him.

269. God bears not in vain the name of a Father, he fills it up to the full It is a name of indulgence, of hope, of proviſion, a name of protection. It argues the mitigation of puniſhment; a little is enough for a father. In all temptations, O let us, by prayer, fly to the arms of our heavenly Father, and expect from him all that a father ſhould do for his child, as proviſion, protection, indulgence, yea, and ſeaſonable corrections (which are as neceſſary for us as our daily bread) and when we die we may expect our inheritance, becauſe in Chriſt he is our father. But yet we muſt remember the name of a father is a word of relation; duty is expected from us, we muſt reverence him as a father, with fear and love; he is a great God, we ought to fear him; he is merciful, yea hath bowels of mercy, we ought to love him; if we tremble before him, we forget that he is loving, and if over bold, we alſo forget that he is a great and holy God: therefore we ſhould always go to the throne of grace with reverence, holy love, and filial confidence in the name of Jeſus.

270. Thoſe that have Chriſt's peace in their own conſciences will be peaceable towards others A buſy contentious diſpoſition, argues it never felt peace from God; and though men think it commendable to cenſure the infirmities of others, yet it argues their own weakneſs; for it is a ſign of a good and a noble ſpirit, when we find any thing good, to bear with our brother's weakneſs. Who was more indulgent than Chriſt? he bore with the infirmities of his diſciples from time to time: O let us carry ourſelves more lovingly to all, eſpecially towards them

them that are weak. Nothing ſhould raiſe us ſo high in our ſelf-eſteem above others, as to forget them to be our brethren: all thoſe infirmities we may ſee, ſhall ſoon be buried, and they aſcend to glory.

271. Many ſhew great reſpect to perſons in eminent ſtations, and to men of excellent abilities; but there may be a great deal of hypocriſy: therefore the truth of love is tried by this, if we bear a ſincere affection to all the ſaints, even to the meaneſt of Chriſt's diſciples, Epheſ. vi. 18.

272. We muſt always take heed of coming to God in our own perſons or worthineſs, but in all things only look to God in Chriſt. If we would look to God as a Father, we muſt ſee him to be Chriſt's Father firſt: if we deſire to ſee ourſelves acquitted from our ſins, let us firſt look at Chriſt riſen for our juſtification; if we think of glorification in heaven, let us look up to Chriſt as glorified; and when we conſider of any ſpiritual bleſſing, conſider it in Chriſt. All the promiſes are made to Chriſt; he takes them firſt from God the Father, and gives them to us by his holy Spirit. The firſt fulneſs is in God, and he empties himſelf into Chriſt; "And of his fulneſs we all receive grace," &c. Col. i. 19.

273. God is ſaid to be our God, or to be a God unto us, when he applies, for our good, that all-ſufficiency which is in himſelf. God is our God by covenant, becauſe he hath made over himſelf unto us in Chriſt. Every believer hath the title paſſed over to him; ſo that God becomes his inheritance. There is more comfort in this, than the heart of man can poſſibly conceive. It is larger than the deſires of his heart: therefore though riches, or honours, or friends, &c. are not ours; yet if able to ſay, by the ſpirit of faith, that God is ours, we have all in him; his wiſdom, to find out a way to do us good; in danger, his power to deliver us; under guilt, his mercy, to forgive; and in any want, his all ſufficiency, to ſupply all our needs. If God be ours in Chriſt, whatſoever God can do, and all things, even whatſoever God hath, ſhall promote our comfort in time, and happineſs throughout eternity.

274. God is the God and Father of all the elect, and particularly a God and Father to every one of them. God is every ſaint's all-ſufficient and everlaſting portion. As the ſun is wholly every

every man's, ſo God loves and cheriſhes all his children, and each of them, even the weakeſt, as if he had but one.

275. There is a myſtery, and depth in the myſtery, not only of election and reprobation, but of God's providence. No reaſon could be given, why ſome of God's children are quiet, and others are greatly afflicted: why one ſhould be poor, and another rich: Pſal. xcvii. 2. "Clouds and darkneſs are round about him:" you cannot ſee him, he is hid in a cloud; but righteouſneſs and judgment are the foundation of his throne. He may often, in his providence, wrap himſelf in a thick cloud that none can ſee him, yet he is juſt and gracious; therefore when any thing befals us, for which we can ſee no reaſon, yet we muſt always reverence the Lord, adore his counſels, and ſubmit to him, who is infinitely wiſer than we, and always remembers his holy covenant.

276. When we are diligent in buſineſs, keep a good conſcience, and in all things act as the diſciples of Chriſt, whatſoever befals us, we may with comfort ſay, The will of the Lord be done; we are found in God's way; and may then through grace expect a guard of angels around us, and the guardian care and comforts of the ſpirit within.

277. All the contention between the fleſh and ſpirit lies in this; whether God ſhall have his will, or we have ours; now God's will is ſtrait, but ours is crooked: if God will have us offer up our Iſaac, we muſt ſubmit, and even readily acquieſce in the whole will of God The more (through grace) emptied of itſelf, the more free and happy we ſhall be, by being more fully ſubject to God: for in what meaſure we part with any thing for him, we ſhall receive even in this world an hundred fold in joy and peace, &c.

278. All outward good things we ſhould uſe in a reverent manner; knowing that our liberty to enjoy them was purchaſed with the blood of Chriſt. As David when he thirſted for the waters of Bethlehem, would not drink, becauſe it was as the blood of his three worthies: ſo though we have a free uſe of God's creatures, yet muſt be careful to uſe them with moderation and reverence, and all to the glory of God.

279. There is nothing of God can pleaſe the carnal world, becauſe the beſt things are repreſented to the heart of a carnal man

man, as fooliſhneſs. Our corrupt nature above all things would avoid the imputation of folly; and rather than he would be accounted a fool, a natural man will ſlander the ways of God as fooliſhneſs. The law of Chriſt conſtrains us, and makes us do many things, for which the carnal world thinks us out of our wits: but let us quiet our hearts, and account it a great favour from God, when the Michals of the world ſcoff at our goodneſs: for when they are offended, God through Chriſt is graciously pleaſed.

280. To diſcern your ſtate in grace, chiefly look to your affections, for they are intrinſical, and not ſubject to hypocriſy. Men of great parts know much, and ſo doth the devil, but he wants love. In fire all things may be painted but the heat: ſo all good actions may be done by an hypocrite, but the ſacred fire of a divine love, for offering the ſacrifice, he hath not. Oh! therefore chiefly examine the truth and ſincerity of your affections towards God, whoſe name is love.

281. We may be bleſt with large views of the love of God, but can never poſſibly comprehend it; all the fruits of his love will for ever ſurpaſs our finite underſtandings. The Holy Spirit is graciously given to take away the veil, and to make report of it to our ſouls: then as ſoon as the love of Chriſt is apprehended, it conſtrains us to all holy duties; not as fire out of a flint, but as water out of a ſpring. The love of a wife to her huſband may begin from the ſupply of her neceſſities, but afterwards ſhe may alſo love his perſon: ſo the ſoul firſt loves Chriſt for ſalvation, but when it is brought to him, and finds what ſweetneſs there is in him, then the ſoul loves him for himſelf, and eſteems his perſon, as well as rejoices in his benefits.

282. It ſhould be our continual care to manifeſt ſincerity of heart towards God, in our ſeveral callings; and this is done when we look at God in every action, and endeavour to yield our ſouls entirely to the whole will of God, ſerve him with all the heart, and perform the work of our callings by his ſpirit, according to his word, and promote his glory: if we thus labour to approve ourſelves to him, whatſoever be the iſſue, we ſhall be endued with holy boldneſs, and enjoy much inward peace and comfort, having by his grace carried ourſelves as in the ſight of God, and advanced his glory.

283. That a man may perſuade others, he muſt have a love to

to their perſons, clear knowledge of the cauſe, and grace to ſpeak in wiſdom to their ſouls. As we are ſaved by love, we are perſuaded by the arguments of love, which is moſt agreeable to the nature of man; we are led by perſuaſion, and not by compulſion. Men may be compelled to the uſe of means, but not to faith. Many labour only to unfold the ſcriptures, for the increaſe of knowledge, this is a good foundation; but the ſpecial intent of the miniſtry, is to work upon the heart and affections, and lead the ſoul to Chriſt.

284. As we muſt approve ourſelves to God and our own conſciences, ſo to the conſciences of others, that they may witneſs that we love and deal faithfully with them. Oh, how ſhould we labour to do all the good we can, eſpecially to the ſouls of men! If we deſerve well, they will give evidence for us; but if we walk ſcandalouſly, they will accuſe us, that by ill examples we drew them into evil, and hardened them in ſin. May it be always our care, to approve ourſelves to the conſciences of men; that we may have them to witneſs for us; that ſuch of whom we have deſerved well, may be our crown at the laſt day.

285. A man keeps a good conſcience towards others, when he makes it appear that he can deny himſelf to do them good. Conſcience will teſtify, this man certainly regards my good more than his own, he acts ſo, that the world may ſee he is in good earneſt; he ſpeaks well, and makes good his profeſſion by his obedient life. May it be our care ſo to walk! we ſhall then approve ourſelves to the conſciences of all mankind, and to God, through Chriſt Jeſus.

286. There are many that receive ſome divine truths, but they reſerve ſome ſin. When Herodias is diſpleaſed, John Baptiſt muſt loſe his head. Some truths make tranſgreſſors fret, becauſe their conſciences tell them they will not yield obedience; ſome ſin hath gotten dominion over their affections, but conſcience ſaith, I warn thee againſt this ſin; then that hatred which ſhould be turned againſt the world and ſin is turned upon the word and miniſter of Chriſt. Some vermin, when driven to a ſtand, will fly in a man's face; ſo theſe men, when they ſee they muſt yield to conviction, grow malicious, ſo that what they will not follow, they reproach. How much ſhould it

it be our care, at all times, to yield obedience to all that we know of the divine will!

287. There a generation of churliſh men who even watch for offences; becauſe they would go to hell with, as it were, ſome reaſon, they will not ſee who are babes in Chriſt, and who are hypocrites; and ſo caſt reproach upon all. Therefore ſometimes God in judgment towards them may ſuffer good men to fall, and Satan tempts them to take ſcandal at them, to their final ruin.

288. A man may know that the word of God hath wrought upon his conſcience, when he comes to it, that through grace, he may hear, learn, and reform. A man with an heart without guile, is glad to hear the ſharpeſt reproofs, becauſe he knows that ſin is his greateſt enemy. But if we live in any courſe we are loath ſhould be reproved, it is a ſign our hearts are full of guile. Corrupt men mould their teachers to their luſts; but a good man is willing that divine truths ſhould have their full authority; and he continues, through grace, in the way of duty, though never ſo contrary to fleſh and blood.

289. It is the duty of miniſters to prevent objections that may ariſe in the minds of the people, and hinder the due reception of goſpel doctrine. That divine truths may more readily enter our hearts, we ſhould labour to eſteem the perſon and his work; for ſecret ſurmiſes are ſtones of ſtumbling, which both miniſters and people ſhould be careful to prevent or ſoon to remove.

290. A man ought not to commend himſelf, but in ſome ſpecial caſes; firſt, becauſe pride and envy in others will not endure it: ſecondly, it diminiſhes God's glory, therefore we ſhould take heed: thirdly, it deprives us of comfort, and hinders the apology of others. The heathen could ſay, that ſelf-applauſe is very diſagreeable: let us take heed that we do not ſnatch our right out of God's hand. But, on the contrary, in ſome caſes, we may commend ourſelves; as when we have a juſt call to make an apology, in a way of defence, and for the conviction of them that unjuſtly ſpeak evil of us: and we may ſpeak well of ourſelves, in a way of example to others; as parents to their children; th s well becomes them; becauſe it is not out of pride or vain glory, for the motive is at once diſcovered to be love.

291.

291. It is the duty of all men, but eſpecially of God's children, when they have juſt occaſion, to defend the injured: thus the blind man, John xi. 30. defended Chriſt againſt the phariſees; and Jonathan ſpoke to his father in the behalf of David; though called a rebel, he knew that he owed this ſervice unto truth, and to his friend. God hath a cauſe in the world that muſt be owned, therefore, when religion is brought upon the ſtage, God ſeems to ſay to all, as Jeſus did, "Who is on my ſide, who?" God commends his cauſe and his children to us: "And therefore curſe ye Meroz" (ſaid the angel of the Lord,) curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty," Judg. v. 23. ſo a curſe lies upon thoſe, that when the truth ſuffers, have not even a word for its defence.

292. Uſually the defamers of others are proud vain-glorious perſons; if a man will ſearch for the ſpirit of the devil in men, let him ſearch for it among vain-glorious teachers, heretics and ſuperſtitious perſons. The ground of it is from the nearneſs of two contraries, ſo the oppoſition is the ſtrongeſt; as fire and water when they meet make the ſtrongeſt oppoſition. Who ſo like to God's children, and miniſters, as vain glorious teachers, as making the ſame Chriſtian profeſſion? but Pilate, a heathen, ſhewed more favour to Chriſt, then the phariſees. This uſe we ſhould make of it, not to take offence, when we hear any profeſſor, or even one divine depreciate another; it hath been ſo, and will be ſo to the end of the world.

293. All things beſides the Lord, are only like graſs; when we rejoice therein, and forget God, it is a childiſh joy, as it were only in flowers; after we have drawn out their ſweetneſs, we caſt them away. All outward comforts are common to ſinners as well as ſaints; and without grace, they will ſurely prove ſnares. At the hour of death, what comfort can we have from them, any further than with humility and love to God and men, we have through grace, uſed them well? therefore if we would have our hearts always bleſt with true joy, O let us labour to be faithful in our ſeveral places, and conſtantly endeavour, according to our gifts, to glorify God.

294. To glory in any perſon whatſoever, is idolatry; firſt, becauſe the mind ſets up ſomething, which is not God. 2dly, it muſt be ſpiritual adultery to cleave to any thing more than

to God. 3dly, it is bearing falſe-witneſs, to aſcribe excellency where there is none. We have that prohibition; "Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, nor the ſtrong man in his ſtrength, nor the rich man in his riches:" Jer. ix. 23. God will not give his glory to another; therefore when men will miſplace that glory, which belongs to God alone, he blaſts them, or ſets them aſide as broken veſſels, and even diſdains to uſe them.

295. A Chriſtian's joy is right when it proceeds from right principles, from judgment and conſcience, not from fancy and imagination: then there is fellowſhip between God and him; for our joy muſt ſpring from peace, Rom. v. 1. "Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God." The apoſtles begin their epiſtles with mercy, grace and peace; mercy to forgive, grace to renew our natures, and peace of conſcience to yield us joy. Theſe are things through Chriſt, to be gloried in; if we find by the word, our ſins pardoned, our perſons accepted, and our natures renewed, we may comfort ourſelves in health, in wealth, in wife, in children, in any thing, becauſe all come by Chriſt from the favour of God. We may joy in afflictions, becauſe there is a bleſſing in the worſt, to prepare us for eternal happineſs. Though we cannot joy in affliction itſelf, as being contrary to nature, yet we may in the iſſue of it: ſo that we rejoice aright, when having intereſt in God, we glory in the teſtimony of a good conſcience; when looking inward we find all at peace; when each of us can ſay upon good grounds, that God in Chriſt is mine, and therefore both life and death and all things are mine, ſo far as they may ſerve my trueſt good and everlaſting felicity.

296. The hearts of men, yea of good men, are apt to idolize outward things. When the diſciples through the power of Jeſus had caſt out devils they were ready to be proud; but Chriſt quickly admoniſhed them, "not to rejoice that the devils were ſubject to them, but that their names were written in heaven," Luke x. 20. Therefore when we find the leaſt inclination to glory in any thing, we muſt check ourſelves, and conſider what grace we have, to uſe them; what love to men we have, to turn theſe things to the common good. For whatſoever a man hath, if he hath not alſo humility, and love to uſe it aright, it will be unprofitable, nay, it will increaſe his ſorrows.

297.

297. It hath been an old falſe and fooliſh imputation, to charge diſtraction upon men of the greateſt wiſdom and ſobriety. John the Baptiſt was accuſed to have a devil, Chriſt to be beſide himſelf; the apoſtles to be full of new wine, and Paul to be mad. The reaſon is, as religion is a myſtical and ſpiritual thing, ſo the tenets of it ſeem to be paradoxes to carnal men; as firſt, that a Chriſtian is the only freeman, and others are all ſlaves; the only rich man, though ever ſo mean in the world; the only beautiful man, though (outwardly) ever ſo deformed; and the only happy man, in the midſt of all his preſent miſeries. Theſe things, though true, ſeem ſtrange to natural men, and therefore when they ſee men making conſcience of ſin, they wonder at this commotion for trifles. But theſe men go on in a courſe of their own, and make that the meaſure of all: thoſe below them are profane, and thoſe above them are indiſcreet. By fooliſh fancies and affections, they create excellencies, where there are none, they cry down the purſuit of ſpiritual things as folly. They have principles of their own, to love themſelves, and to love others only for themſelves, and to hold on the ſtrongeſt ſide, and by no means to expoſe themſelves to danger. But when men begin to be religious for Chriſt's ſake, they deny all their own carnal ends; and that makes their courſe ſeem madneſs to the world, therefore they labour to ſpread an ill opinion of them, as mad men and fools.

298. God's children are neither mad nor fools; it is but a ſcandal caſt upon them by the mad men of the world. They are the only wiſe men, if it be well conſidered; firſt, they make the higheſt end their aim, which is to be children of God here, and ſaints in heaven: ſecondly, they aim to be found wiſe men at death; therefore are always making their accounts ready: thirdly, they labour to live anſwerably to the rule of the word. Fourthly, they improve all advantages to advance their grand end; labour to grow better both by their comforts and croſſes, and to make a ſanctified uſe of all occurrences: fifthly, they ſwim againſt the ſtream of the times; though they eat, drink, and ſleep, as other men, yet like the ſtars, they have a ſecret ſettled courſe of their own, which the world cannot diſcern; therefore a man muſt be changed and ſet in a higher rank, before he can have a ſanctified judgment of the ways of God.— May he make us truly wiſe!

299. Thoſe that lay the imputation of folly and madneſs on God's children, will at laſt truly be found the greateſt fools themſelves. Firſt, is not he a fool that cannot make a right choice of things? how do carnal men make their choice, when they embrace periſhing things for the beſt? ſecondly, a carnal man hath not a ſpiritual capacity to apprehend ſpiritual things aright; he cannot ſee things inviſible: thirdly, his heart accounts it a vain thing to ſerve the Lord: fourthly, he judges his enemies to be his beſt friends; and his beſt friends to be his worſt enemies; fifthly, the principles of all his actions are unſound, becauſe they are not directed to the right object and end, therefore all his affections are mad, as his joy, his love, his delight; his love is but luſt, his anger vexation; for his confidence he calls God's love into queſtion: but a falſe ſuggeſtion from the devil he ſoon embraces therefore is he not mad? and this is the condition of all natural men.

300. True freedom is found, when by the ſpirit the heart is renewed, is enlarged, and becomes ſubordinate to God in Chriſt. A man is in a ſweet frame when his heart is made ſubject to God, and drawn out towards him, for the God of all grace ſets it at liberty. God will have us make his glory our aim, and then he will beſtow grace and glory too upon us. True zeal and holy diligence, are uſually attended with the joys of faith, and the firſt fruits of the paradiſe of God.

301. The love of Chriſt manifeſted to me, and my love to Chriſt quickened by the ſpirit, excite an holy admiration in my ſoul: it conſiders what wonderful love is in Chriſt; and the ſpirit witneſſes that this love of Chriſt is ſet upon the ſoul, from hence it begins to argue and admire; "Lord, wherefore wilt thou ſhew thyſelf to me, and not to the world? what is the reaſon thou ſo loveſt me more than others?" The ſoul with God on the mount, is turned from earthly things, then it ſees nothing but love and mercy, and adores. Such grace conſtrains us to do all things out of pure love to God and good will towards men.

302. When Joſhua curſed the man that ſhould build the walls of Jericho he was not in any commotion or revengeful fury, but peaceable and devout. When curſes come from ſuch an one, he is only a declaratory inſtrument, in denouncing God's curſe. Every man muſt not dare to take it upon him, for men often

often curſe when they ſhould bleſs, and ſuch curſes like arrows ſhot upright, fall down upon their own heads. Thoſe that come in the name of the Lord, and are qualified for that purpoſe, and declare the word of God, their curſes or bleſſings are to be regarded, for they are a means to convey God's curſes or his bleſſings to men, "His word carrying life or death," 2 Cor. ii. 16.

303. It is over curious to be exact about the time or beginnings of grace; becauſe frequently it falls by degrees like the dew undiſcernibly: and there is a great deal of wiſdom as well as of power in the work of grace; God offers no violence o the ſoul, but works ſweetly, yet ſtrongly; and ſtrongly, yet ſweetly; he goes ſo far with our nature, that we ſhall freely delight in grace. So that a man ſees the greateſt reaſon, why he ſhould alter his courſe. God doth not overthrow human nature, the ſtream of it is graciouſly changed. the man is the ſame. The ſoul is renewed, aud body and ſoul dedicated to the Lord.

304. When we deſire only forgiveneſs of ſin, and not grace to lead a new life, that deſire is hypocritical. A true chriſtian aſks of God power againſt ſin, as much as pardon. If we have not ſanctifying, we have not pardoning grace; Chriſt came as well by water to regenerate, as by blood to juſtify: Let it be our continual care and endeavour, to grow and increaſe in grace; becauſe, without grace and growth therein, we ſhall never get to heaven; we cannot withſtand our enemies, nor bear any croſs; cannot go on comfortably in our courſe, and cannot do any thing acceptable and pleaſing to God.

305. God will be as the dew upon Iſrael, and he ſhall grow as the lily and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon, Hoſea xiv. 5. — Theſe are not vain words; we have great need of ſuch promiſes, eſpecially in a diſtreſſed ſtate, for then our ſpirits ſink, and our hearts faint; therefore we have need to have the ſame promiſes of comfort often repeated. Prophane perſons think, what need of all this? but if ever pierced in conſcience for thy ſins, thou wilt then be far from finding fault. When God uſeth all the ſecrets in the book of nature, and tranſlates them to ſpiritual things to aſſure us of his mercy and love, how rich his grace!

306. God's children become more circumſpect by their falls;

they learn to ſtand and walk; like cedars, the more they are blown, the deeper will they be rooted. That which men think is the overthrow of God's children, doth but root them the deeper; ſo that after all outward ſtorms, and inward declenſions, (by Chriſt's grace out of weakneſs being made ſtrong in the Lord) this is the iſſue, "They take root downwards, and alſo bring forth fruit upwards, for the Lord reſtoreth their ſouls," &c. Pſ. xxiii. 3.

307. A Chriſtian in his right temper is compared to the beſt of every thing; if to a lily, the faireſt; if to a cedar, the talleſt; if to an olive tree, the moſt fruitful; "And his ſcent ſhall be as the wine of Lebanon," Hoſ. xiv. 9. We ſhould therefore make uſe of natural and apply them to ſpiritual things; if we ſee a lily, think of God's promiſe and our duty, we ſhould grow as lilies; when we ſee a tall tree, think, I muſt grow higher in grace; and when we ſee a vine, think, I muſt grow in fruitfulneſs; when we go into our fields, orchards or gardens, let the eye raiſe the thoughts higher, unto conſideration of what is required, and of what is promiſed, in his holy word.

308. As it is the glory of the olive tree to be fruitful, ſo it is the glory of a Chriſtian to be uſeful in his calling; and the way to be ſo, is, to eſteem fruitfulneſs our glory It is a good ſight to ſee a Chriſtian anſwer his profeſſion, and flouriſh in his ſtation, to be fruitful and ſhine in all good works. When ability and opportunity, and an enlightened zealous heart do all meet for doing good; how glorious to behold!

309. When about to enter upon action, let us always aſk our ſouls, is it ſuitable to my calling, to my hopes? if not, why ſhould I do it? Chriſt hath made me a king, to rule over my luſts, doth this agree with my dignity? this baſe act, this baſe company, ſhall ſuch a man as I do this? when, through grace a man reaſons thus, it will raiſe Ephraim's reſolution; "What have I any more to do with idols?" In walking circumſpectly after the ſpirit we ſhall find the cheering warmth of divine comfort, accompanying every action: and with humility and thankfulneſs, ſhall acknowledge all the comfort and ſtrength we receive, to be from the refreſhing dews of God's grace.

310. In time of calamity, God will preſerve his fruitful trees; as in Deut. xx. 19. The Iſraelites were commanded not to deſtroy

ſtroy them; ſo though God's judgments come, yet will he take ſpecial care of his obedient children. The judgments of God will fall heavy on barren trees; though God may long endure barrenneſs in the want of the goſpel, yet he will not under its enjoyment. It were better for a bramble to be in the wilderneſs, than in an orchard; nothing will keep the ax from the root, but fruitfulneſs in God's vineyard.

311. It may be obſerved that the aged ſeem not to grow, at leaſt not to be ſo zealous as many young chriſtians; but the reaſon is, becauſe there is in young chriſtians, a greater ſtrength of natural parts and more lively affections, and theſe make a great appearance; but aged men grow in ſpiritual ſtrength, and are more refined: their knowledge is more clear, their actions more pure, their zeal more ſeraphical, and not mingled with wild fire; therefore, though aged chriſtians be not carried with an high and full ſtream, yet they become, through grace, more ſtable and judicious, more heavenly minded, and mortified: they continually grow deeper in humility, by a clearer ſight of their own corruptions and daily ſins, and riſe higher towards heaven on the wings of faith and holy love.

312. In true converſion the ſoul is changed, to be of the ſame mind with Chriſt; as he is affected, ſo is the ſoul: and as he loaths all evil, ſo upon this ground, there is in us a loathing every ſin. A carnal man is like a wolf driven from the ſheep, that yet retains his ravenous nature: thoſe that are driven from their ſins by the terrors of conſcience, are only affrighted with ſin's deſert, but do not hate it; therefore the loathing and hatred of all evil is required, as well as leaving it by outward reformation. Divine grace reforms, renews, and quickens us truly to ſerve the Lord.

313. It is evident that our converſion is ſound, when we truly loath and hate ſin, from the heart; a man may know his hatred of evil to be true, firſt, if it be univerſal: he that hates ſin truly, hates all ſin. Secondly, true hatred is fixed; there is no appaling it, but by aboliſhing the thing hated. Thirdly, hatred is a more rooted affection than anger; anger may be appeaſed, but hatred remains and ſets itſelf againſt the whole kind. Fourthly, if our hatred be true, we hate all evil, in ourſelves firſt, and then in others; he that hates a toad, would hate it moſt in his own boſom. Many, like Judah, are ſevere in cenſuring others;

Gen. xxxviii. 24. but partial to themſelves. Fifthly, he that hates ſin truly, hates the greateſt ſin, in the greateſt meaſure; he hates all evil in a juſt proportion. Sixthly, our hatred is right, if we can endure admonition and reproof for ſin, and not be enraged; therefore thoſe that ſwell againſt reproof, do not appear to hate ſin; only with this caution, it may be given with ſuch indiſcretion and ſelf love, that a man may only hate the reprover's proud manner: therefore, in diſcovering our hatred of ſin in others by reproof, we muſt conſider our calling: it muſt be done with a ſweet temper, preſerving due reſpect to thoſe reproved, that it may appear only to be done out of true love and zeal, and not out of anger or pride.

314. All aſſociations that are not begun well, frequently ſoon end in hatred. Take heed with whom you join in amity; before you plant your affections, conſider the perſons, what they are; if any ſigns of grace appear, then it is good; if not, there may be ſoon a ſhameful rent. Through life this ought to be our rule; we ſhould always endeavour in all companies, either to do, or receive ſome ſpiritual good; and where we cannot do, nor receive good, we ſhould avoid ſuch acquaintance. Therefore do good to all, but conſider and take heed, not to ſtand in combination with any wicked or ungodly men.

315. Whoſoever will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution. He muſt have his nature changed, and carry his hatred againſt all evil courſes; therefore to frame a religion that hath no trouble, is only to make an idol. Neuters in religion are like the bats, that can ſcarce be diſtinguiſhed from mice, or flying fowl, becauſe they reſemble both. Oh! take heed of neutrality in religion. After the firſt tranſient heat, many become lukewarm, then they become quite cold. Oh! look to your beginnings, pure affection in religion muſt continue and ſhould always flame in ſacred zeal.

316. Wiſe men do nothing without propoſing ſome great end; and the more wiſe, the greater is the end; ſhall we attribute this to men, and not adore the wiſdom of God? Chriſt certainly would never have appeared in our nature, or ſuffered death, but with ſome glorious deſign. Shall we think this myſtery, of God's taking fleſh upon him, was for a ſlight purpoſe? the end of his coming was to ſave ſinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. He came to bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. But he who will ſave us,

us, muſt firſt deliver us out of ſatan's bondage; therefore Chriſt came to deſtroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. It muſt needs follow, that the ſalvation of our ſouls is of vaſt conſequence, as for this great end, Chriſt both took our nature, and ſuffered death, the death of the croſs.

317. Chriſt came to deſtroy the works of the devil in us, but makes us kings under himſelf, to fight his battles. As by his ſpirit in us, he deſtroys the works of the devil; ſo he doth it in the exerciſe of all our powers of ſoul and body, by exciting his own graces already given. He hath made us kings unto God, that we ſhould fight, and in fighting overcome, and enter into his glory. The chief grace that God helps us to exerciſe in overcoming all our enemies, is faith. We fell by infidelity and diſobedience; Chriſt comes, roots up infidelity, and inſtead thereof he plants faith. Faith unites us to him, and then, by a divine ſkill, it derives ſtrength in every time of need from Chriſt, to fight his battles and triumph over every enemy.

318. Temptations at firſt, like Elijah's cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, if not repelled will ſoon overſpread the whole ſoul: Satan neſtles himſelf, when we dwell upon the thoughts of ſin: we cannot prevent the ſudden riſings of ſin, but by grace we may keep them down, and they ſhould not for a moment remain without oppoſition. O let us earneſtly endeavour always to be in good company, and run our chriſtian race: as the Holy Ghoſt works by theſe advantages. O may we wiſely obſerve and improve them!

319. It is hard to diſcern the working of ſatan from the motions of our own corruptions, becauſe for the moſt part he goes ſecretly along with them. He is like a pirate at ſea, who fires upon us, under our own colours: or like Judas to Chriſt, he comes as a friend, therefore it is hard to diſcern each of them diſtinctly: but ſatan's attempts may be partly ſeen, by the eagerneſs of our luſts, they are ſudden, ſtrong, ſtrange, ſo ſtrange ſometimes that even nature itſelf abhors them: the bleſſed ſpirit of God leads us ſweetly on; but the devil drives a man like a tempeſt, as we ſee Amnon for his ſiſter Tamar. Again, if we reſiſt the motions of God's good ſpirit, miſlike his government, and give way to paſſion, then the devil enters. Let a man be unadviſedly angry, the devil will make him envious and ſeek revenge; paſſions let looſe are chariots in which the devil rides,

rides. Some by nature are prone to diſtruſt, and ſome to be too confident; now the devil joins with thoſe corruptions, and draws or drives them on to acts of ſin. He fits, as it were, upon our corruptions, and there hatches all ſin. All the devils in hell cannot force us to ſin, ſatan works by ſuggeſtions, ſtirring up humours and fancies, but cannot work upon the will: we betray ourſelves by yielding, before he can do us any harm: yet he ripens ſin when cheriſhed in the heart, and brings it forth into actual tranſgreſſion.

320. There are ſome ſins that let ſatan looſe upon us. As firſt, pride; we ſee it in Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Secondly, conceit and preſumption; as we may ſee in Peter, Matt xxvi. 31 — Thirdly, ſecurity; which is always the forerunner of ſome great puniſhment, or great ſin, (which is a moſt awful puniſhment) as we ſee in David. Fourthly, idleneſs; it is the hour of temptation, when a man is out of God's buſineſs. Fifthly, intemperance, either in diet, or otherwiſe. Therefore Chriſt commands us to pray and watch, and keep ſobriety in uſing all the creatures. Sixthly, there is a more ſubtile intemperance of paſſion. In whatever degree we give way to wrath, revenge, or covetouſneſs, &c. in that degree ſatan gains advantage againſt us.— Seventhly, when a man will not believe and ſubmit to truths revealed, though likewiſe natural truths. God gave up ſome to vile affections, Rom. i. 26. becauſe they would not cheriſh the light of nature; much more may we fear divine wrath, when we do not cheriſh the light of his grace. O may God ſave me from mine iniquities, let every one pray, ſubdue ſatan, and quicken me to every good word and work!

321. Chriſt wrought our ſalvation in a ſtate of humiliation: in the way to glory, we muſt be conformable to our head, and paſs through a ſtate of abaſement. We are choſen to a portion of afflictions, as well as to grace and glory. God ſaw it needful, becauſe we cannot eaſily digeſt a flouriſhing condition. We are naturally given to affect outward excellencies; when truſted with great eſtates, we are apt to forget God, and our duty to others. Oh! may we be taught truly and readily by the Holy Ghoſt, to juſtify God, when we are moſt afflicted in our perſons, or frequently abaſed in the world; as many as Jeſus loves, he rebukes and chaſtens, Rev. iii. 19. O may I be always zealous and repent!

322. Many of the poor are exceeding proud, but God ſanctifies outward poverty to his children, to promote true poverty of ſpirit. As they are poor, ſo they have a mean eſteem of themſelves; it makes them inwardly more humble, and more tractable to God's government. When under any croſs, let us obſerve whether we join with God or not? when he afflicts us outwardly, whether inwardly we be more abaſed? when he makes us poor, whether we become alſo more and more poor in ſpirit? When God deſigns to humble us, O let us always labour thro' grace to abaſe ourſelves, and mortify pride.

323. Poverty of ſpirit ſhould accompany us all through life; hereby we ſhall ſee, that no righteouſneſs or ſtrength of our own, is ſufficient for ſanctification; that all the grace we need is out of ourſelves, in Chriſt, even for the performance of every holy duty; for though we have grace in the principle and habit, yet we cannot bring it into act without new grace. There is a fitneſs in trees to be fruitful, but without the influence of heaven they cannot bear fruit. That which often makes us miſcarry in our duties is this, we think we have already ſtrength and wiſdom ſufficient; then, what is begun in ſelf-confidence ends in ſhame. We ſet about duties in our own pride, and ſtrength of parts, and ſo find no better ſucceſs. It is always a good ſign that God will bleſs our endeavours, when, out of a deep ſenſe of our own weakneſs, we by faith, in prayers and ſupplications, like our Lord, Heb. v. 3. alſo water every ſervice, every condition, with ſtrong crying and tears. We ſow with tears, God gives the increaſe, and we reap with joy.

324. It is not ſufficient for a Chriſtian to have habitual grace; the vine cannot bring forth fruit without the freſh influence of heaven, though planted and well rooted in the beſt ſoil. Unleſs God aſſiſts us, former ſtrength will not ſerve, when new duties or temptations come. We muſt exerciſe our faith, love, patience, humility; and for this purpoſe God hath furniſhed us with the ſpirit of all grace. O let us always remember, when we have any temptation to reſiſt, any luſt to ſubdue, and any duty to perform, to pray unto Chriſt for his ſpirit, and to give the increaſe.

325. God through Chriſt, doth not ſo much look at our infirmies, as at our uprightneſs, and ſincerity; and when out of temptation, we ſhould pray and examine what God hath wrought in

in us Then, though infirmities and failings appear, yet if our hearts be upright, God for Chriſt's ſake will pardon them. David and others were accounted upright, yet had many imperfections, and had fallen into great ſins.

326. Watchfulneſs is an exerciſe of all the graces of the ſpirit, and theſe are given to keep our ſouls awake. We have enemies that never ſleep, and our worſt enemy is within, and the worſe, becauſe ſo near. We live in a world full of temptations, and wicked men are full of malice: we are paſſing through our enemy's country, and need to be ever vigilant. The devil alſo watches, to ſpoil every good action; therefore we need to pray always, and watch, that all our graces may be in perpetual lively exerciſe. O may we conſtantly watch with a fear of jealouſy, take heed of a ſpirit of drowſineſs, and labour alſo to keep ourſelves unſpotted from ſuch a defiling world.

327. It may be aſked, How ſhall we know the ſcriptures to be the word of God? Do but grant, there is a God, it will follow that he muſt be worſhipped and obeyed; and that this ſervice muſt be diſcovered to us; then let it be conſidered what word of God can be different from this? Beſides, even by the ſuperſtition of the Jews (who were ſtrict to every letter,) God hath preſerved it for us; and the heretics, ſince the primitive church, have ſo much obſerved one another, that there can be no other than this word of God. But we muſt farther know, that we muſt have ſomething in our ſouls, ſuitable to the truths contained in it, before we can truly and ſavingly believe it to be the word of God. As, that we find its power in working upon our hearts and affections: "Did not our hearts burn within us, when he opened to us the ſcriptures," Luke xxiv. 32. Again, its divine operations to warm and to pacify the ſoul; its power to make a Felix tremble; and its ſearching quality to divide between the marrow and the bone. We do not therefore only believe the ſcriptures to be the word of God, becauſe any man, or becauſe the church ſaith ſo; but principally becauſe we find it by experience working the ſame effects in us, that it ſpeaks of itſelf. Oh let us never reſt, till when we hear a promiſe, we find ſomething in us by the ſanctifying ſpirit, that is ſuitable to it, and ſo aſſuring us that it is this word alone that can inform us of the good pleaſure of God to us, and of our duty towards him, for the ſalvation of our ſouls.

328.

328. There is in God a fatherly anger, after converſion; but this is turned away, when in ſincerity, and repeated acts of faith, we humble ourſelves before him. One ſaith well, There is a child of anger, and a child under anger. God's children are not children of wrath but are ſometimes under his diſpleaſure; when they do not carry themſelves as ſons; when they venture on ſins againſt conſcience, &c. But when they humble themſelves, repent and fly to God in Chriſt for mercy and ſtrength; they come into favour again, and recover the comfort of ſuch a relation to God.

329. We may know God loves us, when by his word and ſpirit he ſpeaks friendly to our ſouls, and we by prayer dutifully ſeek him again: when we have communion with them whom God loves; to them he diſcovers his ſecrets, and by them to us even ſuch ſecrets as our ſouls never knew before. He chiefly reveals theſe ſecrets to us, when our hearts are brought to an ingenuous confeſſion of all our ſins; and we have no comfort but from heaven. A father diſcovers his tenderneſs moſt affectionately to his child when ſick, ſo God reſerves the brighteſt diſcoveries of his love, eſpecially, till ſuch times, as we renounce all carnal confidence. If we can aſſure our ſouls of God's love, let us be at a point, as to every thing that happens to us in the world, whether diſgrace or death; becauſe we may fetch patience and content from hence that God's covenant love will ſupply all our wants, and ſave our ſouls.

330. After a gracious pardon two things remain, infirmities and weakneſſes. Infirmities are corruptions ſtirred up, which hinder good, and excite us to evil; but yet they are not ſo far reſiſted and ſubdued, as not to break forth into act. Weakneſs, this appears when we ſuffer any infirmity to break out into act for want of watchfulneſs; as, if a man be ſubject to an angry temper; when this is working diſturbance in the mind, it is infirmity; but when for want of watchfulneſs it breaks forth into action, it is weakneſs. Theſe diſeaſes are ſuffered to attend us, to remind us frequently of the bitter root of ſin; for if ſin did not ſometimes break forth, we ſhould think our nature perfectly cured. Who could have thought that Moſes, ſo meek a man, could have broken out into ſuch paſſion? we ſee it alſo in David, and Peter, and others: and this ſhews, the corruptions of nature in them were not perfectly healed. But there is this

this difference between the falls of God's children, and of other men; when others fall they ſettle in the mire: but when God's children fall, they ſee their weakneſs, mourn over the bitter root of ſin, hate it the more, and are never at reſt till it be caſt out by the renewed ſtrength of grace and repeated acts of repentance. Therefore let no man be too much caſt down by his infirmities, ſo long as they are reſiſted; for a due ſenſe of them excites a freſh hatred of all our corruptions. God in anger only looks upon ſin unrepented of and unreſiſted. He hath holy ends in ſuffering ſin to grieve us, to keep us from outward vices, and make us long for heaven.

331. None in ſincerity, frequently promote holy conference, but are great gainers thereby. Many aſk queſtions, and are inquiſitive to know: but not that they might practiſe. This is a proud deſire to taſte of the tree of knowledge. But the deſire of well affected Chriſtians, is to know more, that they might more diligently ſeek Chriſt, and obey his voice. We gain much often by diſcourſe with thoſe which are young in religion.—St. Paul deſired to meet the Romans (though they were his converts) that he might himſelf be ſtrengthened and comforted by their mutual faith, Rom. i. 12.

332. When once the ſpirit faſtens the wrath of God upon the conſcience of thoſe he means to ſave, then follow thoſe afflicting affections of grief and ſhame. Hence come a diſlike, an hatred of ſin, and a divorce between the ſoul and its beloved ſin. There was before a ſcepter of ſin in the ſoul; now God begins to diſpoſſeſs the ſtrong man. Then follow ſtrong deſires to be holy, and even deſperation, ſo far as that, if God in Chriſt be not merciful, the ſoul ſaith, what can become of me! As the ſpirit lets in ſome terrors, ſo he likewiſe gives us ſome hopes: as, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" implying a reſignation of the will to take any courſe for ſalvation; then all the world, for even one drop of God's mercy in Chriſt.

333. Chriſt never comes with his comforts, but where he is valued and eſteemed, yet he delights not to hide his face from poor penitent ſinners: but when we are through grace made fit, truly judge ourſelves unworthy of any favour; then he comes and receives us with arms of love. There is comfort for the worſt, if they will come in and ſubmit to God's ordinances; they will be effectual to ſubdue our corruptions, and when once God

God has taken the heart for his temple, he will bring into it all his treaſures; there will be a mutual fellowſhip between God and the ſoul, when we are once ſubdued by his grace, and account his favour to be our life.

334 God is ſo powerful an almighty agent, that he can overcome all oppoſition. He can eaſily by his grace, overthrow the carnal principles of reaſon which every natural man has predominant in the fort of his ſoul. He preſents to men their condition by nature, and lets in a taſte of his vengeance. When God in his ordinances ſhews greater reaſons for goodneſs, than ſatan can for his carnal courſes, then all falls down. Thoſe that are not fully ſubdued, yet let them come to the ordinances; for they are yet within God's reach in his own way. When the word of God diſcovers the baſeneſs, vileneſs, and danger of ſin, the ſoul ſtops; but let none deſpair. Though thy heart be ſtone, God can work powerfully; every thing is difficult to infirmity, but it is a divine work to pull down a wicked ſinner, to renew the ſoul, and prepare it for heaven.

335. However diligent we may be in our calling, yet the ability and the bleſſing can come only from God. We pray for daily bread and he gives it, though we labour for it. There is a gift of ſucceſs, and unleſs it be given us from above, we ſhall then with the diſciples only toil all the day, but catch nothing.

336. Gifts are for grace, and grace for glory. Gifts are peculiar to ſome men, but grace is common to all true chriſtians. Gifts are peculiar to many, and common to ſuch as are not good. Gifts are found with great ſinners: but grace works love and humility, it abaſes and ſanctifies the ſoul. The devil has loſt little of his acuteneſs, but yet he remains miſchievous. Many have great parts, but they may alſo have a deviliſh ſpirit. Grace comes from ſpecial love, and ſhews itſelf in fruits of love to God and man. Many had rather be reckoned devils than fools; they deſire to be accounted men of parts, herein they glory, not in Chriſt; no, but they reject the riches of his grace.

337. It is a hard matter to find the leaſt meaſure of grace, and the greateſt degree of formality; for, as the portrait often exceeds

ceeds the perſon, ſo doth an hypocrite often make a greater ſhew than the true chriſtian. The loweſt exerciſe of ſaving grace is in ſpiritual deſires; and theſe are known to be ſaving, if they proceed from a taſte and inward reliſh of divine things, and not merely from the object preſented in the word. We muſt diſtinguiſh between occaſional affections ſtirred up, and our real general inward frame of ſoul: for thoſe emotions ſuddenly raiſed do preſently ſink again. The waters in the hot bath have a natural heat, but common water, when it is heated to a far greater degree, will ſoon return again to its former coldneſs, and ſo remain.

338. Though certain of victory over our ſpiritual enemies, yet we muſt continue the fight. With the devoted kings of Canaan, Iſrael fought, and all were ſubdued and ſlain. Chriſt is our king that fights for us, with us, and will crown us too, when he hath given us the final victory. The time will come, ſoon the day of triumph come, when we ſhall ſay of all our enemies, as Moſes ſaid of the Egyptians, "Thoſe enemies that we now ſee, we ſhall ſee no more for ever. Be ſtrong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. Even in the bleſſed proſpect of heavenly peace and triumphant joy, O thou militant believer! frequently call thy ſoul to the work of praiſe. O let us praiſe a faithful God, who giveth us the victory through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord!

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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